



**US Army Corps of Engineers**  
New England District

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# **Final Environmental Impact Statement/ Final Environmental Impact Report**

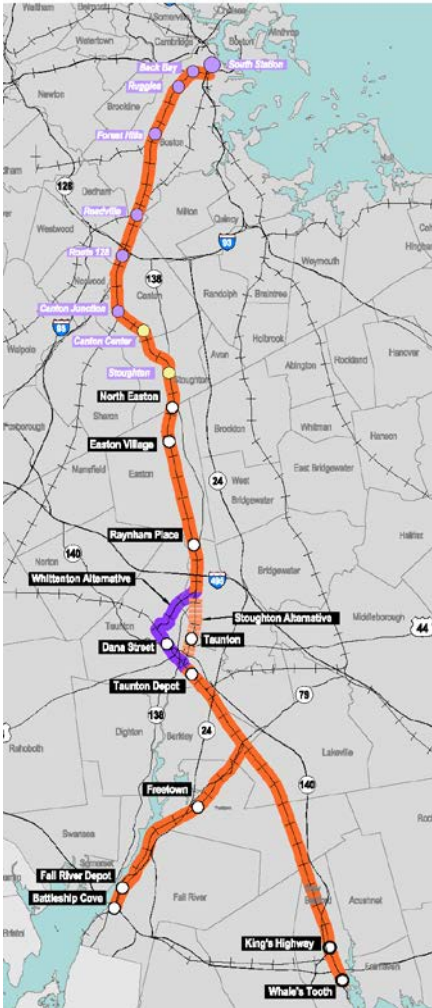
on the

## ***South Coast Rail Project***

proposed by the

### **Massachusetts Department of Transportation**

Department of the Army Permit Application Number NAE-2007-00698  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs EEA No. 14346



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
**New England District**

**August 2013**

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## **Volume III: Responses to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR**

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## **Introduction**

This volume of the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/FEIR) for the South Coast Rail project presents comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) during the comment period from March 25, 2011 to May 27, 2011.

Comments on the DEIS/DEIR were received through postal mail, faxes, email and through the project website. In addition comments were received orally and in writing during the public hearings on the DEIS/DEIR. The oral comments were documented in the public hearing transcripts.

Part A of this volume provides the original comment documents (including letters and emails) and the public hearing transcripts side-barred with unique identifying codes for each comment. A table of contents is provided in each section of Part A to facilitate locating specific comments. Part B of this comment response document provides responses to each comment in a table. Part B presents the responses to comments in the same order the original comment documents were presented in Part A. The responses to comments are organized into the categories listed below. Within each category, responses are generally sorted alphabetically by last name or organization name. Public hearing comments and responses are not presented in alphabetical order and instead follow the order in which each speaker's turn occurred during the hearings.

### **Commenter Categories**

- Federal Agencies
- Federal and State Elected Officials
- MEPA Office
- State Agencies
- Regional Organizations
- Municipal Government and Officials
- Private Organizations and Businesses
- Individuals
- Public Hearings



Part A

Original Comment Documents

# Federal Agencies

Page	Name
1	U.S. Department of the Interior
8	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
408 Atlantic Avenue – Room 142  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-3334



May 26, 2011

9043.1  
ER 11/298

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

**RE: COMMENTS**  
**Draft Environmental Impact Statement**  
**South Coast Rail Project**  
**Boston, New Bedford, Fall River, MA**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed South Coast Rail Project. This is a response to Public Notice NAE-2007-00698, dated March 23, 2011, and the DEIS. This response includes comments by the Department's U.S Fish and Wildlife Services (Service) and the National Park Service (NPS). The Applicant, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, is proposing to establish commuter passenger transit service between Boston and the Cities of New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts.

## **Description of Proposed Action**

The project purpose as defined by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility." Sixty-five alternatives were initially identified by the Interagency Coordinating Group, which included representatives from federal, state and tribal agencies. These 65 alternatives were combined into 38 alternatives by grouping similar alternatives together and dismissing alternatives that were not transportation alternatives. A three-step criterion approach was then applied to the remaining alternatives. Step 1 evaluated whether an alternative met the overall project purpose. Step 2 evaluated those alternatives that met the project purpose as determined in Step 1. Step 3 determined if any of the remaining alternatives should be dismissed based on potential impacts to the aquatic or natural environment. Ultimately, the alternatives analyzed in the DEIS include:

- No-Build (Enhanced Bus) Alternative
- Attleboro Electric Alternative
- Attleboro Diesel Alternative
- Stoughton Electric Alternative
- Stoughton Diesel Alternative
- Whittenton Electric Alternative
- Whittenton Diesel Alternative
- Rapid Bus Alternative

The Attleboro Alternatives would use existing commuter and freight rail tracks and a segment of new right-of-way. Three existing commuter rail stations would be modified and eight new stations constructed. Both electric and diesel options are evaluated. The Attleboro Alternatives would directly impact 20.6 acres of wetlands.

The Stoughton Alternatives would use existing commuter and freight rail tracks and a segment of out-of-service rail right-of-way. Three existing commuter rail stations would be modified and ten new stations would be constructed. Both electric and diesel options are evaluated. The Stoughton Alternatives would directly impact 11.94 acres of wetlands.

The Whittenton Alternatives would use existing commuter and freight rail tracks and two segments of out-of-service rail right-of-way. Three existing commuter rail stations would be modified and ten new stations would be constructed. Both electric and diesel options are being evaluated. The Whittenton Alternatives would directly impact 10.4 acres of wetlands.

The Rapid Bus Alternative would use existing highway rights-of-way and in some locations a new dedicated bus lane. Rapid bus routes would use six new stations. The Rapid Bus Alternative would directly impact 21.5 acres of wetlands.

The proposed project also includes two overnight layover facilities, one in Fall River and one in New Bedford. Three alternative sites are under consideration in Fall River, and two alternatives sites are under consideration in New Bedford.

In addition to direct wetland impacts, all of the alternatives will have temporary and secondary impacts to aquatic resources, including vernal pools and their supporting habitat. Other impacts that have been identified include loss of upland habitat and habitat fragmentation.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

These comments are provided in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 662, *et seq.*; the Clean Water Act 33 U.S.C. 1344 (m); the Migratory Bird Treaty Act 16 U.S.C. 703-712; and the Endangered Species Act (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*).

### **General Comments**

The ACOE plans to identify the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) after completion of the public review of the DEIS. Secondary impacts to the

environmental community have not been fully identified and will be more fully addressed upon the selection of the LEDPA. Similarly, specific measures to mitigate for unavoidable direct and secondary impacts to aquatic resources and other wildlife will be developed once a LEDPA has been chosen.

The DEIS refers to areas that have potential vernal pools throughout the document. The Department recommends that these areas be evaluated to determine their presence or absence, as well as their quality in order to permit avoidance, minimization, or mitigation for impacts to existing vernal pools and their supporting habitat.

L-054.01

### Endangered Species Act

Based on information currently available to us, the northern red-bellied cooter (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) is the only federally listed threatened or endangered species known to occur in the project area. According to our files, and from information provided to us by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, the northern red-bellied cooter only occurs along the existing Middleborough line near the Nemasket and Taunton Rivers. As it is our understanding that no work is planned along this section of the line at this time, we have no further concerns regarding this project and the northern red-bellied cooter. If our understanding of the project is incorrect, or if new information becomes available on the occurrence of listed species in the project area, this determination may be reconsidered.

L-054.02

### Specific Comments

The Massachusetts Audubon Society has designated two Important Bird Areas (IBAs) within the Study Area: the Hockomock Swamp and the Freetown-Fall River State Forest/Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve. Table 4.14-1 lists birds that may be found in the project area. The list identifies several area-sensitive and forest-interior avian species such as the hermit thrush (*Catharus auttatus*), wood thrush (*Hylocichia mustelina*), chestnut-sided warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*), veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), black and white warbler (*Mniotilta varia*), black-throated blue warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*), black-throated green warbler (*Dendroica virens*), Canada warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*), ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) and others. There are also wetland-dependant breeding birds listed in the table, such as the state-listed least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) and pied-billed grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), northern waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*), Louisiana waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) and common yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*). A more detailed assessment of area-sensitive and wetland-dependant breeding bird species should be undertaken. We recommend that a site-specific breeding bird survey be conducted (if adequate existing data is not available) once a LEDPA has been identified. This information once incorporated in the mitigation plan is essential when defining species specific impacts, avoidance strategies, and mitigation measures necessary to offset or compensate for impacts to wetland-dependant migratory bird species and their associated habitats.

L-054.03

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department. Neither the MBTA nor its implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 21 provide for permitting of “incidental take” of migratory birds. While take of migratory birds does not include habitat destruction or alteration, direct taking of birds, nests, eggs, or parts

L-054.04

thereof is likely to occur if clearing or other ground disturbance occurs within migratory bird nesting habitat during the nesting season when eggs or young are likely to be present. Vegetation removal activities should not occur during this time.

The DEIS provides statements of fact and refers to surveys, but does not provide the scientific references throughout. We suggest that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) provide scientific references for factual statements and surveys, and include them in the bibliography section. Examples of statements without references include:

L-054.04

- **Page 4.15-6:** "Populations of pure blue-spotted salamanders occur north of the hybridization zone with Jefferson salamanders . . . There are 102 towns in Massachusetts where blue-spotted salamanders have been observed. Over 172 occurrences have been documented since 1981, as well as 27 historic occurrences that were documented prior to 1981."
- **Page 4.15-6:** "... breeding season [blue-spotted salamanders] lasts from mid-March to late April. Eggs are often laid singly or in a small egg mass, which cling lightly to overhanging vegetation or fall to the bottom of the pond."
- **Page 4.15-7:** "In Massachusetts, riparian areas are the preferred habitat of wood turtles... spend most of the spring and summer in mixed or deciduous forests, fields, hayfields, and riparian wetlands including wet meadows, bogs, and beaver ponds. They return to the streams in late summer or early fall to their favored overwintering location."
- **Page 4.15-13:** "In June 2008, habitat evaluations and surveys along the Stoughton Alternative were conducted for the state-threatened Blanding's turtle. This survey was performed because the NHESP database indicated the presence of Blanding's turtles in the vicinity of the existing railroad bed."
- **Page 4.15-23:** The DEIS states that based on the "2001 rare species studies," suitable habitat was found for several species, including the Hessel's hairstreak and the water-willow stem borer. These studies, however, are 10 years old, and "suitable habitat" may no longer be available. We suggest that the FEIS reference more recent scientific studies or develop plans to conduct surveys to assess the habitat for those species, and provide appropriate mitigation actions if necessary.

L-054.05

## Mitigation

The ACOE plans to identify the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) after completion of the public review of the DEIS. Specific measures to mitigate for unavoidable direct and secondary impacts to aquatic resources and other wildlife will be developed once a LEDPA has been chosen.

Direct wetland impacts of the proposed alternatives range between 10 and 22 acres. The DEIS states that, based upon regulatory requirements, these impacts would be mitigated at a 1:1, 2:1, or 3:1 ratio, depending upon the habitat type impacted. The ACOE's New England District Compensatory Regulation Guidance (Guidance) states that in most cases, it will be necessary to compensate for temporary and secondary impacts to prevent a net loss in aquatic resource functions. Table 2 of the Guidance, *Recommended Compensatory Mitigation for Temporary*

L-054.06

*and/or Secondary Impacts*, includes secondary impacts that the Department would like to see included in a mitigation plan, such as: clearing of upland forest and/or scrub-shrub vegetation within 100' of the stream bank or outermost channel of braided stream; permanent conversion of forested wetlands to other cover types; removal of forested wetland cover for a new corridor; and removal of the forested cover of vernal pool buffer (w/in 250' of pool) when the percentage of disturbance exceeds 25 percent of the total VP buffer area. Mitigation to aquatic resources should include appropriate upland buffers.

L-054.06

## **Conclusion**

The Department recommends that the Applicant provide more site-specific information and that the FEIS more specifically identify impacts to aquatic resources and wildlife. This information and analysis are important to assess the impacts, and will aid in avoiding, minimizing and compensating for them. Please contact Maria Tur, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New England Field Office, 70 Commercial Street, Suite 300, Concord, NH 03301; phone: (603) 223-2541 for additional information.

L-054.07

## **National Park Service**

L-054.08

### **New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park**

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (Park) is located in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The South Coast Rail project seeks to connect this city via train with Boston. As the proposed project holds several potential major benefits for the national park (as follows), the Park strongly supports its implementation.

***It would be a huge economic boon to the area.*** Businesses and residents would relocate to New Bedford and as a result the city's tax base would grow significantly. The City is a legislated partner in a park that is by design a partnership park, and success is mutually interdependent. With that increased tax base would come more funding for tourism initiatives, historic preservation projects, and educational programs in which the Park and the City could collaborate, thus better ensuring adequate stewardship of our cultural resources as well as the development and maintenance of infrastructure and services that provide for a high quality visitor experience.

***It would increase park visitation.*** According to the Park's 2010 comprehensive visitor survey, a surprisingly low percentage of the Park's visitation is from the Boston area, given that this is one of the major metropolitan centers in the United States and is within 60 miles of the park. Although a car trip without traffic is theoretically only one hour, with traffic -- which is common -- the time can escalate up to two to two-and-a-half hours. In providing a convenient option around these delays, the proposed rail would open up a new audience that could connect with the park's history and significance.

L-054.09

***It would make park-related travel cleaner, safer, easier and more efficient.*** Although the Park does have employees that commute from the Boston area, for others the commute is a deterrent to applying for jobs. The proposed rail would alleviate that, opening up a new pool of recruits for the Park. It would also make the periodic business travel by Park staff to the NPS Regional Office and other parks in Boston quicker, less costly, and more environmentally friendly.

L-054.10



Beyond these general benefits that would be incurred from the project as a whole, the Park strongly endorses the electric rail option over diesel. New Bedford has been positioning itself as a leader in the development of alternative energy, from the manufacturing of photovoltaic cells to the assembly of offshore wind apparatus, and this would be very much in keeping with that direction. The National Park Service also strives to be a leader in environmental practices, and should be forward thinking in terms of the environmental impact our children will have to bear and choose the greener option. For more information about the Park, please contact Jennifer Nersesian, Superintendent, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, 33 William Street, New Bedford, MA 02740

L-054.11

### **Taunton Wild and Scenic River**

The DEIS correctly identifies the need to coordinate with the NPS regarding the status of the Taunton River as a National Wild and Scenic River. Each of the rail alternatives involves the Fall River Secondary line which parallels the Taunton River terminating in potential new rail stations in Fall River.

L-054.12

Some of the particular areas of highest concern and potential impact to resources of interest to the Wild and Scenic River include: water quality impacts from construction and stormwater runoff; rail line crossings of the Taunton and tributaries; the selection and siting of a layover facility; design and construction of the major transportation hub envisioned for North Fall River (Fall River Depot).

The proposed route crosses through or close to many significant natural and cultural landscape features identified during the Wild and Scenic River Study, including the Hockomock Swamp, Peace Haven site, and many others. Significant coordination will need to occur to ensure that impacts to these resources are fully understood, minimized or eliminated or mitigated.

The selection and design of a Fall River layover site is of particular concern, as all three currently identified sites are riverfront, although the Weaver's Cove East is at least separated from the riverfront by the existing tracks. In reviewing the DEIS, information about potential layover sites beyond the three identified sites or whether there might be other possible layover sites with less potential impact to the Taunton riverfront area could not be found.

L-054.13

The major Fall River Depot station could be a beneficial feature drawing people to the downtown waterfront area, and, as preliminarily discussed in the DEIS, should include waterfront pedestrian and bike access amenities, and should link and enhance a vibrant urban waterfront for the City of Fall River. Please contact Jamie Fosburgh, New England Team Leader Northeast Region Rivers Program, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109 for more information.

L-054.14

### **Acushnet Cedar Swamp National Natural Landmark**

Construction activities associated with track upgrades for a commuter rail to New Bedford will have noise impacts on the National Natural Landmark (NNL) Acushnet Cedar Swamp. The existing freight rail tracks are immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the NNL. Scheduling any construction near the NNL during the fall or early winter would minimize noise impacts during critical wildlife breeding season during the spring and early summer.

L-054.15



There will likely be additional noise impacts from increased train traffic by the NNL if commuter rail service is initiated to New Bedford. We would be interested in whether there are ways to reduce train noise levels, particularly during critical breeding seasons in the spring and early summer.

L-054.15

It is concluded on page 4.14-73 of the DEIS that reconstructing the section of track adjacent to the Acushnet Cedar Swamp for commuter rail service will not create any additional barrier to wildlife movement. However, construction activities have potential to temporarily impede wildlife movement. Scheduling any construction near the NNL outside known peak wildlife movement periods would minimize any barrier effects. Of greater concern, is the potential permanent impact on wildlife movement due to the increased train traffic. This should be assessed.

L-054.16

It is stated in the DEIS that the proposed Church St. Site Layover Facility, which is separated by Route 140 from the Acushnet Cedar Swamp, will have no impact on the swamp. It is unclear from the DEIS whether there is any hydrologic connection between Acushnet Cedar Swamp (NB-22) and the small section of wetland (NB-23.1) located between the proposed layover facility site and Route 140. Given the potential for increased run-off, potentially containing pollutants, an assessment of this is recommended. For additional information regarding the Acushnet Cedar Swamp, please contact Deb DiQuinzio, National Natural Landmarks Program, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109.

L-054.17

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this DEIS. Please contact me at (617) 223-8565 if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Andrew L. Raddant  
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA (aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 1  
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE, SUITE 100  
BOSTON, MA 02109-3912

OFFICE OF THE  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

May 27, 2011

Colonel Philip T. Feir  
Commander, New England District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Re: EPA Comments on the South Coast Rail Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/  
Draft Environmental Impact Report (CEQ file number 20110095) and Response to Corps Public  
Notice File Number NAE-2007-00698

Dear Colonel Feir:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), we have reviewed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the South Coast Rail Project in southeastern Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> This letter serves as our comment on the DEIS and the Corps' Public Notice of a CWA Section 404 permit for the project. The DEIS was prepared following an extensive public and interagency coordination process led by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Corps that began in 2008. EPA was an active participant in that process as a cooperating agency.

The DEIS details plans by MassDOT to improve public transit service between the cities of New Bedford and Fall River and Boston. As described in the DEIS, the basic project purpose is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts." (DEIS page 1-1). The DEIS considers the No Build alternative, three rail service alignment alternatives (the Attleboro, Stoughton and Whittenton routes) with options for diesel and electric service, and a Rapid Bus alternative to achieve the project purpose. As required by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), MassDOT (in the preface to the DEIS) identifies the Stoughton route as its preferred alignment for the project. The Corps has not yet identified the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for the project and it intends to use public comments on the DEIS to help make that determination prior to issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

EPA supports the Commonwealth's desire to expand transportation mode choice in the South Coast region in an environmentally responsible manner. The DEIS explains that increasing

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<sup>1</sup> We note that the joint DEIS has also been prepared to allow MassDOT to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act.



transit access to the South Coast will result in improvements to regional air quality (through reductions in Vehicle Miles Traveled) and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, support opportunities for transit oriented development, and stimulate overall economic development in the region<sup>2</sup>. We believe a major transit project for the region that meets the basic project purpose also has the potential to bring these benefits, particularly air pollution reductions and support for sustainable development in the South Coast region.

Regardless of the transit alternative ultimately selected, continuing firm commitments and funding by the Commonwealth will be necessary to support a smart growth future for the region. We commend MassDOT for its significant investments to date in working with communities and regional planning agencies to develop the 2009 *South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan*. The corridor plan is based on smart growth principles and describes the steps necessary to promote more sustainable development in the South Coast region in conjunction with increased transit service. MassDOT is supporting the plan by providing smart growth technical assistance to communities in the region. EPA encourages MassDOT to continue their collaborative efforts in order to maximize the smart growth benefits that accrue to any future public transportation investments.

The Corps' analysis of the project under NEPA and the CWA is a critical step in the decision making process for this project, against the backdrop of the longstanding public controversy regarding alternatives and alignments, sources for project funding and operation, and related concerns about the potential for significant direct and indirect impacts to communities and the natural environment. Our attached comments highlight a number of concerns and comments about the project and the DEIS that will need to be addressed during the remainder of the NEPA/404 process. With a few notable exceptions (more fully described below and in the attachments to this letter) we believe the DEIS effectively discusses potential impacts associated with the project alternatives. The DEIS also thoroughly analyzes potential induced development effects and potential impacts to environmental justice communities.

The DEIS provides sufficient information to support the conclusion that the Attleboro alternatives are not practicable and can be eliminated. We also believe the information in the DEIS adequately supports the Corps' decision to continue consideration of the other rail alternatives and the Rapid Bus alternative at this time. We recognize that the Commonwealth does not believe that the Rapid Bus alternative achieves their goals. In this regard, we will review any additional information provided by the Commonwealth and comments received on the DEIS to inform our recommendation to the Corps on the LEDPA.

Our concerns about the DEIS are related to the characterization of direct and indirect (secondary) impacts to wetlands and other waters of the U.S., and the scoring system used to compare impacts and rank the various alternatives under consideration. These result in understating

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<sup>2</sup> Reestablishment of transit service to South Coast region has been extensively studied on and off over the past twenty years, with the most recent effort following the release of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works report entitled, "South Coast Rail: A Plan for Action" dated April 4, 2007. That report, and others that precede it, highlight the Commonwealth's desire to increase transit access to the South Coast region of the state.



impacts to aquatic resources in the Stoughton and Whittenton alignments and overstating impacts to aquatic resources from the Rapid Bus alternative. Based on these and other concerns detailed in the attachment to this letter, we believe the DEIS does not provide enough information for EPA to assess compliance with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. We will make our recommendations to the Corps for the LEDPA determination, among other issues, once we have the opportunity to review and discuss with the Corps additional information concerning impacts to aquatic resources.

As explained above and described in detail in Attachment B to this letter, the Region may have serious concerns regarding alternatives and direct and indirect (secondary) adverse impacts to aquatic resources. In the event that we do not agree with the Corps District's ultimate conclusions regarding those issues, including practicability of alternatives, severity of impacts, and whether a compensatory mitigation plan could adequately address those impacts, we are preserving our ability to raise these unresolved issues to senior officials at both EPA and the Department of Army.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, and in accordance with EPA's national rating system, a description of which is attached to this letter, we have rated the DEIS EC-2-"Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information." As noted above and in Attachment B, additional information is needed on the full extent of the impacts of the alternatives on aquatic resources, which is necessary to, among other reasons, inform our recommendation regarding the LEDPA. Attachments A and B to this letter offer some recommendations regarding additional information that should be provided going forward in the NEPA and Section 404 process.

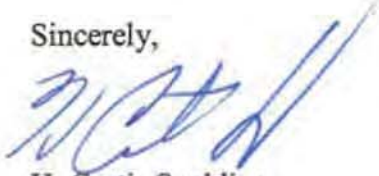
We appreciate the opportunity to participate in numerous workgroup meetings to discuss the project over the past few years and to provide our comments on the DEIS and Public Notice. We encourage MassDOT and the Corps to continue to reach out to local, state and federal agencies and the public for input as the NEPA/404 process advances. EPA recognizes the importance of this project to the Commonwealth, and we reiterate our commitment to work with the Corps and MassDOT to continue to review new information as it is developed, and to address outstanding issues as the NEPA/404 processes advance for the project.

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<sup>3</sup> We believe the proposed project may have a substantial and unacceptable impact on aquatic resources of national importance. This letter follows the field level procedures outlined in the August 1992 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, Part IV, paragraph 3(a), regarding 404(q) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1344(q). After we have evaluated the project further, and as required by Part IV, paragraph 3(b) of the MOA, I will notify you within 25 calendar days of the date of this letter (i.e., no later than June 21, 2011) whether and why we believe the project will have substantial and unacceptable adverse impacts to aquatic resources of national importance.

Please feel free to contact me or Timothy Timmermann of EPA's Office of Environmental Review at 617-918-1025 or Matt Schweisberg of EPA's Office of Ecosystem Protection at 617-918-1628 if you wish to discuss these comments further.

Sincerely,



H. Curtis Spalding  
Regional Administrator

Enclosures

cc:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District  
Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Senior Project Manager  
Regulatory Division, Permits and Enforcement Branch  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Kristina Egan  
Director, South Coast Rail  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

Tom Chapman, Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
New England Field Office  
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300  
Concord, NH 03301



## Summary of Rating Definitions and Follow-up Action

### Environmental Impact of the Action

#### **LO--Lack of Objections**

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

#### **EC--Environmental Concerns**

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

#### **EO--Environmental Objections**

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

#### **EU--Environmentally Unsatisfactory**

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

### Adequacy of the Impact Statement

#### **Category 1--Adequate**

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

#### **Category 2--Insufficient Information**

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

#### **Category 3--Inadequate**

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.



## **Attachment A: Detailed EPA Comments on the South Coast Rail Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

### **Environmental Effects from Induced Growth**

#### General

The DEIS provides an excellent analysis of the potential for environmental effects from growth that may be induced by the build alternatives. The approach is one of the best that we have seen in our review of Environmental Impact Statements, and may serve as a model for future transportation projects. The DEIS makes a compelling case that smart growth development of the South Coast region is better for the environment than “business as usual,” regardless of the transit improvements ultimately implemented. One concern we have, however, is whether MassDOT can ensure that future development will follow a smart growth pattern since it will take concerted commitments by state and local governments as well as the private sector to make this happen. We commend MassDOT for the significant investments it has made to date in developing the 2009 *South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan* and providing technical assistance to communities in the South Coast region. We recognize that Chapter 7 of the Corridor Plan addresses implementation, as does the DEIS (page 5-27), but both in a relatively general manner. The magnitude of environmental impacts from induced growth will depend on the extent to which smart growth is achieved, so it is important to understand the actions that the Commonwealth commits to undertake.

L-068.01

We recommend that the FEIS describe firm, detailed commitments that the Commonwealth is prepared to make to support a smart growth future for the region. For example, one of the assumptions made in creating the smart growth scenario is that “infrastructure constraints will be overcome within reason” and that the Commonwealth will help “support investments in infrastructure to realize more compact development.” (DEIS page 5-12) Adequate water and sewer infrastructure will be important to successfully implement compact development in some communities. However, since the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) no longer allocates points for wastewater projects based on a community’s Commonwealth Capital (smart growth) score, it does not appear as if wastewater infrastructure funding is currently being targeted at projects in communities committed to smart growth. As a means to address this particular barrier to smart growth, the FEIS could describe whether the Commonwealth (DEP) would change its priority ranking process for the State Revolving Fund in order to support smart growth in the South Coast region (or elsewhere). This is just one example of the kinds of investments and commitments the Commonwealth could make to support compact, smart growth development in the area to be affected by the project. Also, the FEIS should address the extent to which the Commonwealth will commit resources to protecting the Priority Preservation Areas, in addition to establishing a regional transfer of development rights program. Without these kinds of investments in both development and conservation, future growth is more likely to follow Scenario 1 (business as usual), and the region will not reap the environmental benefits of smart growth that are described for Scenario 2 in this DEIS.



Additional detailed comments on the Chapter 5.0 of the DEIS:

Page 5-13. As we noted when we reviewed the Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Technical Report, we do not understand why Scenario 2 includes some No-Build growth, but Scenario 1 does not, at least as described in the DEIS. Confusingly, in the Indirect Effects section on page 5-23 both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 are described as including baseline plus induced growth. It is not clear which statement is accurate. If, in fact, one scenario includes baseline growth but the other does not, this makes it difficult to compare the two scenarios. This difficulty is illustrated in a comparison of Table 5-2 with Figures 5-9 through 5-11, which do appear to include No-Build growth in both scenarios. For example, under Scenario 2 for the Stoughton alternative, Table 5-2 shows that New Bedford will lose 567 fewer households than No-Build. Since the No-Build projection for New Bedford is that it will lose 1,283 households, this implies that under Scenario 2 New Bedford will lose a total of 716 households (1,283 minus 567). Yet Figure 5-10 (Scenario 2: Stoughton Alternative, Total Growth) indicates that New Bedford will lose 607 households, not 716. We recommend that both scenarios treat No-Build growth in the same manner throughout the document, and discrepancies such as these be reconciled and corrected. If the differences between scenarios (in terms of whether they include No-Build growth) affect the environmental impacts analyses, these will need to be corrected also so that fair comparisons can be made.

L-068.02

Page 5-15. Table 5-2 provides estimates of the expected growth in households for each of the alternatives, including growth in four Rhode Island communities (Tiverton, Portsmouth, Bristol, and Warren) that may be affected by the project. We note, however, that the Rhode Island household growth is not depicted in Figures 5-3 through 5-11 and we recommend that this growth be shown, along with growth in the Massachusetts communities. For Figures 5-6 through 5-11, information on No-Build growth should be available from Rhode Island's Office of Statewide Planning.

L-068.03

Page 5-17. Assumptions for Future Growth Scenario. We had recommended during agency meetings that the analysis of potential environmental impacts that could be attributed to induced growth include stormwater runoff. Runoff from development is a significant contributor to poor water quality in southeastern Massachusetts and elsewhere, and we continue to believe that an estimate of potential impacts from induced development should be made. One approach would be to estimate the amount of impervious surface that will be created by induced development, and use hydrologic data to calculate the annual runoff from these impervious surfaces. We recognize that some of this runoff will be directed to stormwater treatment systems or otherwise absorbed before it reaches waterways, but having an estimate of the maximum potential for stormwater contamination would be useful in the comparison among alternatives.

L-068.04

Page 5-18, first bullet. Here and elsewhere in Chapter 5 we recommend that it be made clear when only direct impacts to wetlands are being discussed, and not the full suite of direct, indirect/secondary, and cumulative impacts. For example, at a minimum we recommend that this first sentence read: "Residential housing development typically results in minor **direct** impacts to wetlands because of local, state, and federal legal protections."

L-068.05



Page 5-20, Table 5-4. Is there a typographical error in the “Loss of Forest Land” category? As shown, the “high” smart growth scenario results in a greater loss of farmland than the “low” scenario, which doesn’t match what is described in the text.	L-068.06
Page 5-23, second paragraph. We recommend either deleting the last sentence (“Thus, certain regulated resources experience improvements, rather than degradations, over time.”) or providing a more complete description. Depending on the kind of wetlands mitigation provided, it can be a long time before mitigation replaces lost values and sometimes mitigation is not successful. In other words, successful wetland mitigation (especially wetland creation) is more complex than this last sentence implies.	L-068.07
Page 5-24. Table 5-5. We note that although the build scenarios (Scenario 1 and 2) reduce the loss of population (households) from Fall River and New Bedford as compared with No-Build, they do not stem the loss completely. Even the smart growth scenario (Scenario 2) still results in the loss of several hundred households from each city.	L-068.08
Page 5-35, Table 5-11. Although the text indicates that the analysis does not include indirect impacts to wetlands, this should be made even clearer in the table. For example, the title of Table 5-11 could read “ <b>Direct</b> Wetland Impacts (Acres of Loss)” instead of simply “Wetland Impacts (Acres of Loss)”.	L-068.09
Pages 5-42 to 5-43. There is an error in Table 5-15. We believe that the VMT projections for Scenario 2 are incorrect, and should be replaced with projections developed by VHB on 12/11/09. Specifically, under Scenario 2 in Table 5-15, the VMT increase for Attleboro should be 2,829,380, for Stoughton the increase should be 2,826,264, and for Rapid Bus it should be 3,147,190. These revised estimates were developed by VHB on 12/11/09 in response to EPA’s comments on the Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Technical Report. We commented that the VMT reduction factor (from 43 VMT/household/day to 26 VMT/household/day) for Scenario 2 should <u>only</u> be applied to those households living in smart growth areas (PDAs), and not to those living outside PDAs. VHB subsequently revised the estimates, and it is these revised numbers that should be presented in Table 5-15.	L-068.10
Page 5-44. Section 5.3.2.9. Economic Effects, Scenario 1. There appears to be a typographical error in the second sentence. The sentence states that wetland losses are evaluated below, but this section is on economic effects.	L-068.11
Page 5-67. Table 5-23. There appear to be typographical errors in the table, since the text indicates that the changes associated with Scenario 2 (in terms of incremental and percent change land conversion) are negative (meaning less land will be developed), not positive, but the table shows the opposite.	L-068.12



## Environmental Justice

L-068.13

The Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis conducted by the Corps for the South Coast Rail DEIS was guided by the requirements of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy, Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5610.2 Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations. These policies direct agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their activities on minority and low-income communities.

The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act (December 1997) provides 6 guiding principles including 1) considering the composition of the affected area to determine whether minority populations, low-income populations, or Indian tribes are present in the area affected by the proposed action, 2) considering relevant public health data and industry data concerning the potential for multiple or cumulative exposure to human health or environmental hazards in the affected population, to the extent such information is reasonably available, 3) recognizing the interrelated cultural, social, occupational, historical, or economic factors that may amplify the natural and physical environmental effects of the proposed agency action, 4) developing effective public participation strategies, 5) assuring meaningful community representation in the process, and 6) seeking tribal representation in the process in a manner that is consistent with the government-to-government relationship between the United States and tribal governments.

L-068.14

In addition, in the ENF, the Secretary of EOEEA identified several environmental justice requirements for the DEIR including:

- defining and mapping EJ populations in project area,
- describing tangible benefits to EJ communities,
- identifying potential disproportionate impacts on EJ communities and any proposed mitigation, and;
- presenting strategies to enhance public participation in the environmental review process.

EPA believes that the DEIS meets the requirements of these guidance documents, and that the analysis appropriately evaluates the potential for disproportionate adverse impacts to environmental justice populations (as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts EJ policy) – specifically evaluating adverse impacts due to land acquisition (neighborhood disruption/fragmentation, residential displacements, and business/job displacements), increases in noise levels and air pollution and compares these impacts to non-environmental justice neighborhoods. Impacts to EJ populations are expected to be minimal in all of these areas except for noise.

The analysis shows that at a regional level, moderate and severe noise impacts would not be predominately borne by residents of EJ neighborhoods in any of the alternatives. However, at the community level, it shows that in all the rail alternatives, the noise impacts in Fall River would be predominately borne by EJ communities. In addition, the affected community level

L-068.15



analysis shows EJ communities in some of the study area municipalities would be disproportionately affected by noise impacts relative to non-EJ communities in these municipalities (i.e., Canton, Taunton, and Stoughton). However, the DEIS notes that severe impacts will be mitigated and a noise mitigation plan will be developed. Two types of noise mitigation measures will be considered for rail noise abatement: noise barriers and building noise insulation. EPA recommends that the impacted communities be involved with the development of the noise mitigation plan and have an opportunity to participate in decisions regarding the mitigation plans for their neighborhoods. It is not clear whether the mitigation plans will be enforceable. The FEIS should describe how these plans will be enforced and how they plan to address any unforeseen impacts to these communities.

L-068.15

Environmental justice is not only about identifying and addressing adverse impacts of a project on communities but also ensuring that affected communities have access to the benefits of a project. Possible benefits of this project described in the DEIS include increased property values and improved access to jobs, colleges, hospitals, and Boston, as well as the potential for transit-oriented development in the vicinity of the new stations. While all of the alternatives will benefit EJ populations, the amount of benefit will vary depending on the alternative and community. For example, the analysis states that the Attleboro and Stoughton Alternatives would provide the greatest overall benefits to EJ populations; and the rapid bus alternative would provide fewer benefits when compared to rail but would also result in the least overall adverse impacts to EJ populations (primarily from noise).

L-068.16

The DEIS also notes that some of the benefits may come with unintentional consequences. For example, increased property values may have an adverse impact to EJ populations if it results in gentrification. The FEIS should discuss approaches for minimizing gentrification and loss of community cohesion and adoption of these approaches (e.g. affordable housing options) should be an integral part of planning discussions for the project.

L-068.17

In terms of selecting the preferred alternative, EPA recommends that the Corps/MassDOT follow the CEQ's Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act (December 1997 ) which states "that when the agency has identified a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes from either the proposed action or alternatives, the distribution as well as the magnitude of the disproportionate impacts in these communities should be a factor in determining the environmentally preferable alternative. In weighing this factor, the agency should consider the views it has received from the affected communities, and the magnitude of environmental impacts associated with alternatives that have a less disproportionate and adverse effect on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes." In this case, all of the alternatives under consideration provide benefits to EJ populations and the question that should be addressed by the Corps/MassDOT is whether identified adverse impacts can be adequately addressed.

L-068.18

The DEIS outlines an extensive stakeholder involvement process to date including project flyer distribution to EJ neighborhoods, translation of materials, availability of interpreters at public meetings, use of ethnic newspapers, and community workshops in impacted EJ communities. EPA recommends that this public outreach strategy be continued as the project moves forward.

L-068.19



Public participation will become even more critical as the project moves from planning to implementation/construction. Outreach should especially be targeted to those communities who will be disproportionately impacted by noise.

L-068.19

EPA also supports the continued consultation with Native American tribes to determine if any of the alternatives would have an adverse effect on undocumented cultural resources.

L-068.20

### **Water Supply Impacts**

Based on information presented in the DEIS (see DEIS Table 4.17-30), the Stoughton Electric/Diesel alternative set appears to have the least potential to impact drinking water quality, especially with regard to stormwater discharges to water bodies, Interim Wellhead Protection Areas, and Zone IIs.

L-068.21

Section 4.17 of the DEIS (Water Resources) adequately assesses most potential environmental impacts to affected reservoirs and wellfields, pollutant fate and transport, mitigation practices for spill containment and prevention from the rail alternatives, and provides an exhaustive overview of existing regulations and permit authorities for water resources in the affected towns. We note, however, that the discussion of potential impacts from the Rapid Bus Alternative is incomplete. Apart from cursorily mentioning salt as a stormwater pollutant from roads, impacts from the use of winter deicing chemicals for the Rapid Bus Alternative on existing highways, bus terminals, impervious surfaces and proposed lane additions in Raynham, Bridgewater and Brockton are given scant attention in the DEIS. We recommend that more discussion and data, including existing sodium/chloride concentrations in stormwater, surface water and ground water in affected Zone IIs, be provided for the Rapid Bus Alternative. Table 4.17-27 of the DEIS summarizes the wells, water systems, and Zone II stormwater discharges for the Rapid Bus Alternative. It would be helpful if the FEIS included the following information to better understand the potential magnitude of impacts:

L-068.22

- the existing sodium/chloride concentrations in water supplies, reservoir tributaries, and stormwater discharges;
- what Best Management Practices (BMPs) are proposed for salt application optimization and reduction,
- how salt is stored near Zone II areas;
- whether there are highly sensitive zones that require more attention; and
- if sodium chloride concentrations are increasing over time, and, if so, what remedies are proposed for reductions.
- the current concentrations of stormwater constituents (including sodium and chloride) in public water supplies with Zone Is and IIs penetrated by the Rapid Bus road alternative. These data are available from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and affected drinking water systems as a result of routine Safe Drinking Water Act monitoring for inorganics, metals and organics. If such concentrations are approaching or exceed federal/state Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), the FEIS should explain the remedies and BMPs proposed to reduce concentrations. EPA believes that understanding existing water quality conditions prior to project construction is necessary to better assess any future environmental impacts.



## Stormwater Permitting Requirements

The DEIS correctly identifies the requirement for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater associated with construction activities associated with any of the Build Alternatives. EPA has issued the *NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges From Construction Activities* (“Construction General Permit” or “CGP”), which authorizes stormwater discharges that meet the permit’s eligibility criteria. Where stormwater discharges are proposed into Outstanding Resource Waters (“ORW”), operators must file a WM 08B Notice of Intent with MassDEP prior to seeking CGP authorization from EPA.

L-068.23

For all Rail Alternatives, the DEIS indicates that maintenance and cleaning functions will be performed at proposed layover facilities. Pursuant to 40 CFR 122.26(b)(14), facilities engaging in such activities are considered to be engaging in an industrial activity and require an NPDES permit for stormwater discharges from such facilities. EPA has issued the *Multi-Sector General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Industrial Activity* (“MSGP”), which authorizes stormwater discharges that meet the permit’s eligibility criteria. As with the CGP, operators must file a WM 08B Notice of Intent with MADEP prior to seeking MSGP authorization from EPA where discharges are proposed to an ORW.

Both the CGP and MSGP include specific provisions related to the eligibility and control of discharges to impaired water bodies, with or without established Total Maximum Daily Loads (“TMDLs”). Though the DEIS refers to MADEP’s 2006 *Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters* to obtain the impairment status of relevant water bodies, the proponent is reminded that it must reference the most current list (at this time, 2010) of waters available at the time of permitting. If EPA or MADEP determines that certain proposed discharges are not eligible for coverage under the CGP or MSGP, the proponent must obtain an individual NPDES permit for such discharges.

L-068.24

## Air Quality

EPA believes the air quality analysis in the DEIS is reasonable and thorough. The inputs and methodology in the analysis are consistent with other air quality analyses prepared for transportation projects in Eastern Massachusetts. The appropriate MOBILE6 emission factor model and CAL3QHC microscale program were used to prepare the regional and microscale air quality analyses. In general, we concur with the air quality summary and conclusions presented in the DEIS. When compared to the No Build scenario, the analysis concludes that none of the build alternatives will result in an increase of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or nitrogen oxides (NOx) [precursors to ozone], in fact, a reduction of VOC and NOx for the build alternatives are projected in future years. In addition, the microscale analysis demonstrates that the build alternatives will not result in violation of the one-hour or eight-hour national ambient air quality standard for carbon monoxide.

L-068.25

Chapter 2 of the DEIS (page 2-6), incorrectly identifies the eight-hour ozone classification for Eastern Massachusetts as “severe”. The Boston-Lawrence-Worcester (E. Mass), MA eight-hour ozone nonattainment area consisting of ten counties in eastern Massachusetts (Barnstable

L-068.26



County, Bristol County, Dukes County, Essex County, Middlesex County, Nantucket County, Norfolk County, Plymouth County, Suffolk County, and Worcester County) is classified as moderate. See 40 CFR 81.322. This classification should be corrected in the FEIS. L-068.26

We encourage MassDOT to commit to the construction air quality impact mitigation measures, and emission reduction measures at rail layover facilities which are identified in Section 7.4.6 (pages 7-15 and 7-16) of the DEIS. These commitments should be included in the Corps FEIS and Record of Decision for the project. L-068.27

We note that the Attleboro diesel locomotive alternative will require all new rolling stock, (purchase of new train sets consisting of locomotive engine, coaches and cab), while both the Stoughton and Whittenton diesel locomotive alternatives would extend existing services and may be able to utilize a number of existing train sets. As the construction period for diesel train alternatives range from four to seven years, new locomotive engine purchases would likely be built to Tier 4 emissions standards that apply to newly-built locomotives starting in year 2015. EPA also encourages, wherever possible, implementation of an accelerated timeline for locomotive rebuilding, thereby providing emission controls earlier than currently required. When rebuilding locomotive engines, EPA encourages re-manufacture to the cleanest emission control practicable at the time. L-068.28

## **DEIS Scoring System**

### Background

The DEIS describes a scoring process (DEIS page 3-121) that was developed to demonstrate the relative performance of the alternatives with respect to specific criteria. The scoring system was applied to determine how well the alternatives met the project purpose, whether they are practicable, and whether they result in positive (beneficial) air quality impacts. The scoring system was also used to compare a range of environmental impacts across alternatives, and ultimately to provide an assessment of the overall performance of each alternative. L-068.29

### General Comments

The Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA require the alternatives analysis in all EISs to include the alternative of “no action” (40 CFR 1502.14(d)) to provide a benchmark to enable a comparison of the effects of alternatives (Question 3, CEQ’s Forty Most Asked Questions about CEQ’s NEPA Regulations). In practice, agencies typically have used the no action (also known as the no build) alternative not only to compare alternatives with respect to impacts but also to show how they perform when compared to what would occur if no action were taken. In this case, while the DEIS does include discussion of a no-action alternative (as defined on DEIS page 3-31), the scoring system relied on in the DEIS to draw comparisons and conclusions about which alternatives meet the project purpose, it omits any comparison of the alternatives to the no build condition<sup>4</sup>. Instead, the DEIS scores alternatives based solely on how well they perform as compared to the best performing alternative, and assigns a letter grade (A- L-068.30

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<sup>4</sup> EPA recommended this comparison in our January 9, 2009 scoping comments on the project and during an Interagency Coordination Group meeting on October 22, 2009.



F) to the relative comparison score. We believe this approach in the scoring system introduces a bias to the process because it masks the fact that an alternative that performs less well than the optimum one still can achieve the purpose of the project. Using a scoring system that compares alternatives' performance to the future no-build baseline would be a more objective presentation of the comparison and would be consistent with the intent of the CEQ regulations. In addition, we believe the assignment of grades with the ultimate use being a comparison of "Counts of Grade "F" is misleading. The use of the system results, for instance, in the grade "F" for the Rapid Bus alternative under both the "VMT" and "Regional Mobility" criteria, even though the Rapid Bus alternative reduces VMTs and results in an increase in regional mobility. The assignment of a failing grade fails to recognize that all of the build alternatives reduce VMTs and increase regional mobility, albeit with the rail alternatives performing better than Rapid Bus. The subsequent tally of "failing" grades to rank alternatives further compounds this problem.

L-068.30

We believe that the Corps should incorporate the no-build alternative into their comparisons of alternatives, consistent with the intent of the CEQ regulations. We also believe the Corps should eliminate the score and grade components of the criteria tables, and instead simply present, for each criterion, the performance information for each of the alternatives. This performance information is already contained in the criteria tables, so our suggestion would be simple to implement and would result in a much clearer and more relevant depiction of information related to the practicability determinations.

## **ATTACHMENT B**

### **SECTION 404(b)(1) GUIDELINES EVALUATION FOR THE SOUTH COAST RAIL TRANSPORTATION PROJECT**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England Region (“the Region”) prepared this document to describe and evaluate the effects of the proposed construction of the South Coast Rail transportation project located in southeast Massachusetts on streams, wetlands, and wetland dependent wildlife. This document utilizes the information presented in the current Clean Water Act § 404 Public Notice (“the PN”); the South Coast Rail Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“the DEIS”), which also serves as the substantive application for a CWA section 404 permit; several site visits by EPA Regional staff; and other information collected during the history of the proposed project. The text summarizes the Region’s current position on alternatives in the context of § 230.10(a) of EPA’s Clean Water Act § 404(b)(1) Guidelines for Specification of Disposal Sites for Dredged or Fill Material (40 CFR Part 230) (“the Guidelines”) and analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed project in the context of §§ 230.10(b) and (c) of the Guidelines. After carefully examining the DEIS, PN, and other information, we do not believe there is sufficient information to determine compliance with the Guidelines. Our rationale follows. L-068.31

#### **II. ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

##### **A. Landscape Setting**

Descriptions exist of the geologic, topographic, soils, and other landscape features within the project study area. DEIS at sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.10 - 4.18. As with nearly all of southern New England, southeast Massachusetts has been influenced substantially by human disturbance, including agriculture (especially the cranberry industry), industrial development, and urbanization. Section 4.2.2 of the DEIS provides additional detail describing existing land use conditions within the project study area.

##### **B. Aquatic Resources**

Principal wetland systems and water bodies are described in DEIS sections 4.16.2.1 and 4.16.2.2. Major river systems in the project study area are listed in Table 4.17-1. These streams, rivers, and wetland systems that exist in the project study area and alternatives corridors are described more fully in DEIS sections 4.16 - 4.18.

##### **C. Ecological Functions**



The river, stream and wetland systems within the South Coast Rail project area provide a broad range of ecological functions for the landscape. Field work by MassDOT's consultants and visits to the project study area by Regional staff documented that, taken in total, the stream and wetland systems provide all 13 functions and values listed in the Corps Highway Methodology-Descriptive Approach.<sup>1</sup> While most of these systems do not provide all 13 functions and values individually, some do. With respect to wildlife expected to be found in the project study area, a review of Tables 4.14-1, 4.14-2, and 4.14-3 shows that greater than 80% of birds, 90% of mammals, and 90% of amphibians and reptiles are wetland dependent, respectively. This information is notable and elevates both the importance of these aquatic resources as well as the significance of expected adverse impacts from the proposed project.

L-068.32

Figures 4.16-2a – 4.16-2q, and 4.16-3a – 4.16-8w of the DEIS provide the standard graphical summary of principal functions and values for each individual wetland area that would be impacted directly by each of the South Coast Rail alternatives. This is helpful visually for an overview of wetland functions and values along the various alternative corridors. On the other hand, the DEIS contains neither a detailed narrative explanation of these ecological functions and values nor an explanation of how these wetland specific ecological functions contribute to the functioning of the broader aquatic systems of which they are a part (i.e., a watershed perspective). Such explanations would provide a more thorough understanding of the importance of these aquatic resources as well as the significance of expected adverse impacts from the proposed project. The FEIS should contain these explanations.

L-068.33

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

MassDOT and the Corps, in initially surveying the range of possible options, identified 65 potential alternatives for the project by soliciting input from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, an Interagency Coordinating Group (ICC), the Commuter Rail Task Force, and the public through a series of public meetings. This list was then narrowed down to five alternatives encompassing four routes and three modes for further analysis by MassDOT, and Corps, and the ICC.

In Section 3 of the DEIS, the Corps ultimately evaluated eight different alternatives:

1. No-Build (Enhanced Bus) Alternative
2. Attleboro Electric Alternative
3. Attleboro Diesel Alternative
4. Stoughton Electric Alternative
5. Stoughton Diesel Alternative
6. Whittenton Electric Alternative
7. Whittenton Diesel Alternative

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. 1993. The Highway Methodology Workbook: Integrating Corps Section 404 Permit Requirements with Highway Planning and Engineering and the NEPA EIS Process. NEDEP-360-1-30. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Concord, MA.



## 8. Rapid Bus Alternative

### A. No-Build (Enhanced Bus) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would consist of continued investment in the existing regional transportation network with no new rail or bus service provided in Southeastern Massachusetts. Bus schedules would be enhanced based on existing bus service routes to Fall River and New Bedford. There are no proposals to increase Taunton commuter bus service.

This alternative may include a new expanded park-and-ride/bus station near the Route 24/140 highway interchange, near the Route 106/24 park-and-ride lot, or at the Mt. Pleasant park-and-ride lot. Incentives would also be created to enable private commuter bus service operations to acquire a new fleet of fuel efficient and clean emission buses. The DEIS indicates that regardless of the outcome of MassDOT's proposal, the No-Build alternative is expected to be implemented.

### B. Attleboro Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)

The Attleboro Alternatives would provide new commuter rail service from New Bedford and Fall River to South Station through Attleboro using the New Bedford Main Line, the Fall River Secondary Line, the Attleboro Secondary Line, a new bypass track and the Northeast Corridor. The Boston-New Bedford route would be 60.4 miles long and the Boston-Fall River route would be 57.9 miles long. Both alternatives would be a new rail service without established stopping patterns and would only stop at major stations.

Both alternatives would require eight new commuter rail stations, major reconstruction at three existing commuter rail stations, and minor work at the existing commuter rail station at Route 128. Construction would also include the creation of a third track along the Northeast Corridor between the proposed Attleboro Bypass and the Readville Interlocking in Boston<sup>2</sup>; reconstruction of a new two-track railroad on a new right-of-way between the Northeast Corridor and the Attleboro Secondary; and reconstruction of existing tracks from the Attleboro Bypass to Weir Junction as a single track with one siding. Construction, reconstruction, or widening of 44 bridges and 39 railroad at-grade crossings would also be required. Two overnight layover facilities, one on the New Bedford Main Line and one on the Fall River Secondary Line, would be required as well. Additionally, the Attleboro *electric* alternative would involve construction of a traction power system including one main substation in Taunton, one switching station in Attleboro, and six paralleling stations (one in Norton, one in Berkley, two in Freetown, one in New Bedford, and one in Fall River).

### C. Stoughton Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)

The Stoughton Alternatives would provide commuter rail service to from New Bedford and Fall

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<sup>2</sup> A fourth track option was also evaluated to attempt to address anticipated service deficiencies identified with the three track alternatives.



River to South Station through the Northeast Corridor, the New Bedford Main Line, the Fall River Secondary Line, the Attleboro Secondary to Weir Junction in Taunton and an extension of the existing Stoughton Branch to Taunton. They would extend existing commuter rail services along these corridors with already established stopping patterns. The Boston-New Bedford route would be 54.9 miles long and the Boston-Fall River route would be 52.4 miles long.

Construction for these alternatives would include reconstruction of existing tracks of the Stoughton Line from Canton Junction to Stoughton as a double track; construction of new tracks on existing, abandoned right-of-ways from Stoughton to Winter Street in Taunton as one to two tracks; and reconstruction of existing tracks from Winter Street in Taunton to Weir Junction as a single track. These alternatives, as well as the Whittenton alternative discussed below, include an 8500 foot long elevated trestle that would carry the trains through a portion of Hockomock Swamp. Construction, reconstruction, or widening of 45 bridges and 46 railroad at-grade crossings would be required, as well as construction of ten new commuter rail stations and major reconstruction at two existing commuter rail stations. They would also require two overnight layover facilities, one on the New Bedford Main Line and one on the Fall River Secondary Line. Separately, the electric alternative would require construction of a traction power system including two main electric substations (one in Easton and one in New Bedford), two switching stations (one in Canton and one in Berkley), and six paralleling stations (one in Easton, one in Taunton, two in Freetown, one in New Bedford, and one in Fall River).

#### **D. Whittenton Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)**

The corridor for the Whittenton Alternatives is a variation of the corridor for the Stoughton Alternatives. The corridor would follow the same route as the Stoughton Alternatives but would swing northwest around Taunton and use the inactive Whittenton Branch right-of-way instead of continuing north in a straight line towards Taunton. As a consequence, the Whittenton Alternatives would avoid traversing the Pine Swamp, which the Stoughton Alternatives directly intersect. This alternative would also extend existing commuter rail service with established stopping patterns. The Boston-New Bedford route would be 56.5 miles long and the Boston-Fall River route would be 54.0 miles long.

For this route, the following would need to be constructed: reconstruction of existing tracks of the Stoughton Line from Canton Junction to Stoughton as a double track; construction of new tracks on an existing, abandoned rail right-of-way from Stoughton to Raynham Junction as one to two tracks; construction of new tracks on an existing rail right-of-way from Route 138 in Raynham to Whittenton Junction as a single track; and reconstruction of existing tracks on the Attleboro Secondary from Whittenton Junction to Weir Junction as a single track. Construction, reconstruction, or widening of 42 bridges and 53 railroad at-grade crossings is also required. Construction for commuter rail stations, layover facilities, and the traction power system (for the electric alternative) would be the same as for the Stoughton alternatives.



## **E. Rapid Bus Alternative**

The Rapid Bus Alternative would provide rapid express bus service from New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton to South Station using a proposed dedicated, primarily reversible bus lane to be built along Routes 24, I-93/128, and 140. North of I-495, buses would use a combination of new zipper bus lanes, new reversible bus lanes, two-way bus lanes, existing zipper HOV lanes, and existing HOV lanes, along with a short section in mixed traffic. South of the I-495 interchange in Raynham, buses would travel in the general purpose lanes with mixed traffic. The Boston-New Bedford route would be 56.4 miles long and the Boston-Fall River route would be 51.5 miles long.

The Alternative would be a new transportation service with four branches. It would create six new rapid bus stations and major expansion of the bus terminal at South Station. Additionally, the Rapid Bus Alternative would provide eight peak period trips between each terminal station and Boston's South Station. Inbound service would originate from New Bedford, Fall River, downtown Taunton, and Taunton Silver City Galleria. Each branch would have a maximum of two stations in the South Coast region.

The Alternative would require improvements to highway infrastructure along Route 24 (construction of a third lane from Route 140 to I-495; widening of Route 24 to accommodate movable barriers; and construction of a zipper bus lane from I-495 to Harrison Boulevard); and Route 128/I-93 (construction of a reversible bus lane from Harrison Boulevard on Route 24 to Logan Express Lot; and construction of a two-lane bus roadway from Logan Express Lot to existing HOV zipper lane on the Southeast Expressway). Twenty bridges and 11 highway interchanges would also have to be constructed, reconstructed, or widened.

## **IV. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

### **A. Analysis of Alternatives**

EPA's § 404(b)(1) Guidelines prohibit a discharge of dredged or fill material if there "is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences." 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a). This fundamental requirement of the § 404 program is often expressed as the regulatory standard that a permit may only be issued for the "least environmentally damaging practicable alternative" or LEDPA. Where (as here) the basic project purpose is not water dependent, and it involves fill in wetlands, practicable and less environmentally damaging alternatives are presumed to exist unless clearly demonstrated otherwise by the applicant. The burden to demonstrate compliance with the alternatives test and rebut the presumptions rests with the applicant, in this case MassDOT. Furthermore, the level of documentation needed to demonstrate compliance with the Guidelines – including the alternatives test – is commensurate with the severity of the impact. See 40 C.F.R. § 230.6 and the introductory note to § 230.10.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See also the August 23, 1993 Memorandum to the Field issued by EPA and the Corps of Engineers entitled



The Corps has defined the basic project purpose in this case as follows: “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts.” DEIS at 1-1. The Region participated with the Corps in developing this definition of basic project purpose, and we agree that it represents an appropriate characterization of the project purpose to ensure that a reasonable range of alternatives is examined.

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The Corps characterized the “basic” project purpose as being relevant only to whether a project is water dependent or not. *Id.* The Corps then identified an “overall” project purpose, to be used to evaluate whether there are less environmentally damaging practicable alternatives, as: “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts to enhance regional mobility.” *Id.* at 1-2. The Region did not learn of the Corps’ decision to develop a separate “overall” project purpose until we received the DEIS, and we do not agree with the Corps’ establishment of a different project purpose definition to be used in the alternatives analysis. The Region and the Corps’ New England District’s longstanding interpretation and practice has been to define the “basic” project purpose both for determining whether a project is water dependent and for determining whether alternatives are practicable (in light of the basic project purpose).

The Corps relies on the following language in 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a)(2) to support its approach: “An alternative is practicable if it is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of *overall project purposes*.” (emphasis added). However, the very next sentence states that “...an area not presently owned by the applicant which could be reasonably be obtained, managed, or utilized *in order to fulfill the basic purpose of the proposed activity* may be considered.” (emphasis added). Clearly the terms “overall” and “basic” are intended to be used interchangeably. Indeed, the preamble to the Guidelines states, in the discussion of alternatives (as distinguished from the water dependency discussion): “We consider it implicit that, to be practicable, an alternative must be capable of achieving the basic purpose of the proposed activity.” Guidelines Preamble, “Alternatives,” 45 Fed. Reg. 85335, 85339 (December 24, 1980).

The 1993 Highway Methodology Workbook, which the Region and the New England District have utilized for almost twenty years, also treats the two terms interchangeably. For example, on page 5 the Workbook states “The Corps will define this overall/basic project purpose broadly to ensure that a reasonable range of alternatives will be examined,” and “This [NEPA] ‘purpose and need’ differs from the Corps section 404(b)(1) Guidelines statement of ‘overall/basic project purpose.’” In addition, the Workbook repeatedly displays a diagram of the permit process which refers only to the Corps’ identification of the basic project purpose and makes no mention of the establishment of a separate overall project purpose. The Region’s view is consistent with the Corps’ guidance issued in the Hartz Mountain Development Corporation Permit Elevation, which addresses the issue of

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“Appropriate Level of Analysis Required for Evaluating Compliance with the § 404(b)(1) Guidelines Alternatives Requirements.” <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/guidance/wetlands/flexible.cfm>



defining the basic project purpose in the context of the alternatives analysis, not water dependency: L-068.34

The Guidelines alternatives analysis must use the “basic project purpose,” which cannot be defined narrowly by the applicant to preclude the existence of practicable alternatives. On the other hand, the Corps has some discretion in defining the “basic project purpose” for each Section 404 permit application in a manner which seems reasonable and equitable for that particular case.

HQUSACE Review Findings, Hartz Mountain Permit Elevation, 1989, at 4.

The Region’s comments on the practicability of alternatives are therefore framed in terms of satisfying the basic project purpose. As discussed further below, however, even if the Corps’ “overall” project purpose formulation were used, we do not believe it would make a difference to our analysis in this case.

The Corps does not identify the LEDPA in the DEIS, but MassDOT does identify the Stoughton family of alternatives as its preferred corridor.<sup>4</sup> DEIR at P-8. Based on the information provided in the DEIS, the Region believes that the only alternatives shown to be impracticable are the Attleboro Alternatives, for reasons discussed below. While the remaining Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus Alternatives differ in the extent to which each satisfies the basic project purpose, none has been clearly shown to be impracticable. As discussed in Section V. below, the Region believes that additional information is needed to determine which is the least environmentally damaging to the aquatic environment and, hence, the LEDPA.

### **1. Practicability of the Alternatives**

Before turning to an analysis of the alternatives, we would like to outline our concerns about the process used by the Corps to score the alternatives. The DEIS presents the differences among all of the various alternatives (except for the no-build alternative), by comparing their relative performances under several specific criteria. The best performing alternative under any given criterion is the baseline against which the other alternatives are compared and assigned a relative score, which is then expressed as a letter grade (A through F). While this approach provides a simple way to portray the general and relative performances of each alternative with respect to the evaluation criteria, it has no direct bearing on the question of whether any particular alternative is practicable under 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a) or can meet the basic project purpose. We believe the approach introduces a bias to the evaluation because it obscures the fact that an alternative that performs less well than the optimum one still can achieve the purpose of the project. The approach may inform the applicant as to which build alternatives are “best” or “better” from its perspective, L-068.35

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<sup>4</sup> MassDOT has not stated a preference between the diesel and electric variations of the Stoughton alternative.



but it does not generate a "score" that addresses whether or not an alternative is practicable. As a result, from the standpoint of the 404 review process, it creates confusion by obscuring the determinative fact that an alternative that performs less well than the optimum one still can achieve the purpose of the project. An alternative that is "practicable" under § 230.10(a) cannot be rejected simply because it does not perform as well as other alternatives, including the preferred alternative. Therefore, in reviewing the factual information presented in the DEIS's alternatives screening discussion, the Region has considered each alternative's performance relative to whether it can meet the basic project purpose in light of costs, logistics, and existing technology, rather than whether it can perform best or better than other alternatives. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that in the FEIS, the Corps should eliminate the score and grade components of the criteria tables, and instead simply present, for each criterion, the performance information for each of the alternatives. This performance information is already contained in the criteria tables, so this change would be simple to implement and would result in a much clearer and more relevant depiction of information related to the practicability determinations.

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#### **a. The Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus Alternatives**

As noted above, in order to be practicable, an alternative must be available and capable of being done. The DEIS does not identify any issues related to the availability of the Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus Alternatives. The properties on which the alternatives would be built are all available by virtue of being either owned or obtainable by the Commonwealth.

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"Capable of being done" takes into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics. The preamble to the Guidelines provides clarification on how cost is to be considered in the determination of practicability: "*Our intent is to consider those alternatives which are reasonable in terms of the overall scope/cost of the proposed project.*" Guidelines Preamble, "Alternatives", 45 Fed. Reg. 85335, 85339 (December 24, 1980). The preamble to the Guidelines also states that "[i]f an alleged alternative is unreasonably expensive to the applicant, the alternative is not 'practicable.'" *Id.* at 85343. The EPA and Corps 1993 Memorandum to the Field (cited in footnote 2 above) emphasizes that "... it is not a particular applicant's financial standing that is the primary consideration for determining practicability, but rather characteristics of the project and what constitutes a reasonable expense for these projects that are most relevant to practicability determinations."

The applicant's preferred alternatives -- Stoughton electric and diesel -- would cost \$1.88 billion and \$1.48 billion, respectively. DEIS at 1-8. We assume, for purposes of this comment letter, that the applicant has determined that the costs associated with the Stoughton alternatives are practicable; otherwise it would not have selected Stoughton to be its preferred alternative. The Whittenton electric and diesel alternatives, at \$1.81 billion and \$1.41 billion, respectively, would be slightly less expensive. *Id.* The Rapid Bus alternative would be the least expensive at \$812 million. *Id.* Thus, none of these alternatives should be rejected as impracticable on the basis of cost.

The DEIS does not identify either technological or logistical issues that would preclude any of these



five alternatives from being considered practicable. Therefore, the key question is whether any of them would fail to satisfy the basic project purpose.

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Considering the various evaluation criteria described in chapter 3 of the DEIS, the Region concludes that all five of the alternatives would satisfy the basic project purpose, i.e., would "more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts." <sup>5</sup> All of them would improve the quality of transit services over existing conditions; meet a substantial portion of ridership demand (ranging from 44% to 63%); and provide a "comparable or competitive travel time and improved reliability" compared to existing peak commuting conditions. *Id.* at 3-123, 3-124. In addition, while not required to satisfy the basic project purpose, all of the alternatives would provide a benefit of reduced vehicle miles traveled.

The DEIS identifies additional "sub-criteria" related to the practicability of the alternatives, using the same scoring approach described above. These sub-criteria are the cost per rider, construction schedule, and on-time performance. None of the information presented related to these criteria demonstrates that any of the five alternatives (Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus), would fail to meet the basic project purpose.

The DEIS states that the Rapid Bus Alternative would be the least cost-effective alternative, based on the balance of capital and maintenance costs of the service to the benefit of the service (expressed as the number of riders projected to use the system). *Id.* at 3-130. We have several comments about this criterion. First, the DEIS states that the cost/benefit metric, expressed as cost per rider, includes the cost of environmental mitigation. However, an environmental mitigation plan has not yet been developed, and in the Region's opinion the cost of mitigating the impacts to the aquatic environment from the rail alternatives would be substantially higher than the cost associated with mitigating the impacts to the aquatic environment from the Rapid Bus Alternative (see discussion in Section VI, below). Therefore, we believe that the cost per rider figures portrayed in Table 3.3-11 (DEIS at 3-131) are incomplete and inaccurate. We expect that including the likely mitigation costs would bring the cost per rider figures closer together. In addition, even if there is a substantial disparity in cost per rider, that does not render the Rapid Bus Alternative impracticable or unable to meet the basic project purpose. From an overall cost standpoint (which is how practicability is evaluated), it is the least expensive alternative, and it would, notwithstanding the cost per rider, meet a substantial portion of ridership demand (44%), thus "more fully meet[ing] existing and future demand for public transportation...." Furthermore, we note that the cost per rider estimate for Rapid Bus was approximately \$32 in a Cost Effectiveness Comparison distributed at an Interagency Coordinating Group meeting in 2009, as compared with the nearly \$100 estimate included in the DEIS. The FEIS should explain why the cost per rider estimate for Rapid Bus increased by over 3-fold between these two documents, as compared with the other alternatives for which the cost estimate changed little, if any.

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<sup>5</sup> We do not necessarily agree that every criterion evaluated in the DEIS is essential to the determination of whether an alternative would be practicable and satisfy the basic project purpose. For the purpose of this comment letter, we have nonetheless considered the information provided for each criterion.



The DEIS also evaluates whether the alternatives would improve regional mobility. As discussed above, the Corps identified the “overall” project purpose to be “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts to enhance regional mobility.” This is the same as the basic project purpose with the addition of the clause “to enhance regional mobility.” While the Region does not agree with the Corps’ distinction between “basic project purpose” and “overall project purpose” from the standpoint of the alternatives analysis, in this particular case we do not believe there is a meaningful difference between the two. That is, more fully meeting the demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston will, by definition, enhance regional mobility.

L-068.38

In evaluating regional mobility, the DEIS considered both the connectivity between Fall River/ New Bedford and Boston, and interregional connectivity. All of the alternatives clearly enhance mobility between Fall River /New Bedford and Boston.

The Region believes that the goal of improving interregional connectivity, similar to MassDOT’s goal of supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities, is properly viewed as a desirable benefit of the project rather than a fundamental aspect of the basic project purpose (or even the “overall” project purpose as described by the Corps). In other words, the absence of improved interregional mobility would not be a proper basis for concluding that an alternative fails to meet the basic project purpose. Nonetheless, we note that all of the alternatives do improve interregional connectivity to some extent, although the rail alternatives would be much more effective in this regard than the Rapid Bus Alternative. We also note that MassDOT envisions a feeder bus service to train stations “to connect the urbanized communities in the study area to the South Coast stations.” DEIS at 1-17. This feeder bus network would provide enhanced bus service from the communities to the train stations to provide an alternative to driving to stations. *Id.* The FEIS should evaluate whether an expansion of the local bus network as an adjunct to the Rapid Bus Alternative would further enhance interregional connectivity.

We recognize that the Rapid Bus Alternative does not perform as well as the rail alternatives for some criteria. We also believe that there may be additional steps that could be taken that would result in better performance of this alternative. We recommend that the FEIS evaluate the following issues related to the Rapid Bus Alternative:

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\* Performance: We note that travel speeds for the Rapid Bus service are based on the posted speed of the adjacent travel lanes. The FEIS should discuss areas like Route 24 where the bus will operate in its own designated lane and whether the bus route can be designed to be operated safely at higher speeds to reduce overall travel times for this alternative.

\* Congestion: The FEIS should describe solutions that could be implemented to address congestion that the bus service will face as it enters the mixed traffic portion of its route along the Southeast Expressway. Improvements to address congestion issues will benefit the Rapid Bus Alternative as well as the general commuting public utilizing shared portions of the proposed travel corridor.

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\* **Ridership:** Ridership on the Rapid Bus Alternative suffers due to a number of issues described in a May 2010 Central Transportation Planning Staff memo in DEIS Appendix 4.1-J (page 10). That memo reads in part, "There are five major factors contributing to why the rapid bus alternatives produces lower performance measures, than the commuter rail alternatives. These factors are:

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- Run times are longer to South Station, with the exception of bus only versus Whittenton Diesel, in which the rail alternative is three minutes slower than the Rapid Bus Alternative.
- The commuter rail alternatives serve several more stations
- Lack of connectivity with the Orange Line Station
- Transfer times between the rapid bus and the rapid transit lines are a little longer than with the commuter rail lines
- Fewer new stations being provided in areas of proposed growth
- Lack of intra-regional connectivity / no intermediate stations

Together these factors produce between 52% and 65% of the daily boardings and 35% to 50% of the auto diversions that, for instance, the Stoughton Diesel rail alternatives produce."

The FEIS should make it clear whether any one change, or combination of changes, to the Rapid Bus Alternative would result in a meaningful change in ridership. In particular, the FEIS should explore what it would take to provide a connection between the proposed Rapid Bus service and the MBTA's Orange Line and what effect additional stations in areas of proposed growth could have on ridership.

\* **Rapid Bus Equipment:** The DEIS at Page 3-110 indicates that buses "could" feature amenities. Based upon comments made by MassDOT representatives and its consultants throughout the process leading up to the DEIS, it has been our understanding that the buses "would" be "state of the art" with comfortable seating and wifi, etc., to attract ridership and give high quality service. We believe that the FEIS should be revised to reflect previous verbal commitments by the Commonwealth to provide this level of service for the Rapid Bus.

L-068.42

#### **b. The Attleboro Alternatives**

EPA is persuaded, based on the information in the DEIS, that the Attleboro Alternatives would fail to meet the basic project purpose due to an interlocking set of confounding performance/logistical issues which characterize this alignment alone.

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As background, transportation modeling underlying the DEIS indicates that the limiting condition for all rail scenarios is the terminal throat interlocking capacity and terminal approach capacity at South Station. DEIS, Appendix 3.2-A (Systra Consulting, Inc., A Draft Network Simulation Analysis, August 2009) at 14. When capacity is reached and exceeded by train volume, congestion



in the terminal throat causes late arrivals. These in turn further exacerbate the problem of expeditiously clearing or loading platform tracks. The Northeast Corridor (“NEC”) is another potential capacity bottleneck. DEIS at 3-133; Appendix 3.2-B (Systra Consulting, Inc., Technical Memorandum, Analysis of South Coast Rail Attleboro Alternative PM Peak Period, Using Back Bay as Northerly Terminal (Tower I and South Station Effects Removed), October 29, 2009). The NEC is an active rail line running between New York and South Station in Boston. From Attleboro to Boston, the corridor experiences heavy use, including Amtrak Regional and Acela service, MBTA commuter rail service, and freight rail service. The Attleboro Alternatives would provide commuter rail service to South Station using the Northeast Corridor, proposed Attleboro Bypass, Attleboro Secondary, New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary.

The Attleboro Alternatives suffer from the combination of severe logistical issues. First, they would cause overwhelming congestion in the Tower 1 terminal interlocking throat at South Station. This issue is distinct for the Attleboro Alternatives, because they would entail the introduction of new trains to the system, rather than extensions of existing trains as under the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives. As a result, they fail, under any modeled scenario (even at substantially reduced train volumes), to achieve the MBTA on-time standard in the morning peak and fare even worse in the evening peak. The overall on-time performance for the diesel alternative would be less than 50%, and the electric alternative would be on time only slightly more than 50%. DEIS at 3-132. Additionally, the Attleboro Alternatives would cause or compound on-time performance issues throughout the regional south side transportation system, including Worcester, Franklin, Needham, and Providence Lines.

To determine whether the performance of the Attleboro Alternatives could be improved independent of the South Station capacity issue, the DEIS evaluated a modeled scenario that effectively removed the South Station constraint by terminating rail service at Back Bay Station. This scenario revealed that the NEC by itself acts as a bottleneck with respect to the Attleboro Alternatives. Irrespective of South Station constraints, the NEC north of the Readville Station lacks adequate capacity to support increased train volumes associated with the Attleboro Alternatives. An Attleboro-to-Back Bay scenario would still operate with unacceptable on-time performance, while negatively impacting the on-time performance of four other south side commuter rail lines. For example, on time performance for AM peak period trains for the electric Attleboro alternative would be 84.6%—meaning that that 15.4% of the northbound commuter rail trains serving the Needham, Franklin, Providence and Stoughton lines would arrive late every morning—and 64.1% for the PM peak. DEIS, Appendix 3.2-B, Memorandum of MassDOT to Army Corps on South Station Planning and South Coast Rail (May 5, 2010), at 6. While this is an improvement over the Attleboro-to-South Station alternatives, it falls below the MBTA service policy and is well short of the performance of the No-Build scenario. DEIS, Appendix 3.2-B (Systra Consulting, Inc., Technical Memorandum, Analysis of South Coast Rail Attleboro Alternative PM Peak Period, Using Back Bay as Northerly Terminal (Tower I and South Station Effects Removed), October 29, 2009), at 3. Thus, the DEIS indicates that even after assuming away the South Station choke point, the Attleboro Alternatives



still result in major cascading problems on the NEC.<sup>6</sup>

To break the NEC bottleneck and ensure that the Attleboro Alternatives would have an acceptable on-time performance, the DEIS concluded that a fourth track would need to be constructed alongside the NEC. The additional fourth track would begin near Readville Station; extend through Forest Hills Station and Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue; and terminate at Back Bay Station. As explained by the DEIS, this potential fix would itself raise an array of issues sufficiently significant and complex to render it logistically impracticable. It is estimated that it would take between 10 to 12 years to construct the fourth track, with a cost of an additional \$2.48 billion. Among other things, the project would require placing the Orange Line in an approximately 2-mile tunnel from Ruggles Station through Back Bay (with the 1.4-mile stretch from Ruggles Station to Massachusetts Avenue requiring new construction); rehab and replacement of almost one mile of existing subway tunnel to accommodate commuter rail trains; shuttle service, at an estimated cost of \$281,000,000, to continue servicing the riders of the Orange Line during construction of the connections to the tunnel; major renovation (defined as reconstruction of headhouses, vertical circulation, and platforms) of six stations; acquisition of nine residential, commercial, or state properties; and significant property impacts due to construction or operation of the fourth track, including to Southwest Corridor Park, a 4.7 mile, 52-acre linear park stretching from Forest Hills Station to Back Bay Station that is owned and maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Permanent impacts to Southwest Corridor Park would result from the loss of 2.85 acres of parkland, and temporary impacts would include the loss of 8.54 acres of parkland throughout construction.

The Region believes that the DEIS demonstrates that the Attleboro Alternatives would not be practicable alternatives to meet the basic project purpose because they would offer very untimely service even at comparatively infrequent intervals, combined with the fact that they are predicted to compromise, rather than enhance, the existing public transportation infrastructure. Moreover, the only way to remedy these deficiencies is to construct a fourth track, which itself has serious flaws that render it impracticable, including an additional cost that would more than double the overall cost to greater than \$4 billion; a significantly longer (4-5 years vs. 10-12 years) construction schedule; lengthy and substantial disruptions to the existing Orange Line commuter services and an important inner city park that runs through environmental justice communities; and a wide-ranging, complex subsurface construction project (with all its attendant uncertainties) in the center of Boston.<sup>7</sup> For all of these reasons, EPA believes it is reasonable to dismiss the Attleboro Alternatives from further consideration.

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<sup>6</sup> The Attleboro Alternatives would have a greater impact on the Northeast Corridor than the other alternatives for two main reasons. First, they would use a longer segment of the NEC corridor (29 miles for the Attleboro Alternative compared to 15 miles for the Stoughton Alternative and Whittenton variant). Second, they would entail new trains, not extensions of existing trains as under the Stoughton Alternatives and Whittenton variants, thereby requiring new operating slots on 29 miles of the already congested NEC.

<sup>7</sup> We also note that the Federal Rail Administration has indicated to the Corps that it considers the fourth track alternative to be infeasible. *Id.* at 1-24.



### c. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Region believes that, based on current information in the DEIS, the Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus Alternatives are all practicable and would meet the basic project purpose. We also believe that further evaluation of issues associated with the Rapid Bus Alternative should be conducted to determine the extent to which there could be improvements in that alternative's overall performance. Finally, we agree that the Attleboro Alternatives are not practicable alternatives and need not be considered further.

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## V. ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

According to the DEIS, the construction of the Rapid Bus and Rail Alternatives would have substantial adverse impacts to aquatic resources and wetland dependent wildlife. See DEIS sections 4.16.3.1 – 4.16.3.5.

DEIS section 4.16.3.2 describes the methodology used to evaluate direct adverse impacts and explains that “[e]ach alternative corridor was assessed for the presence of wetland resources within and adjacent to the right-of-way, and the impacts associated with them. For purposes of this evaluation, wetlands within 100 feet of the right-of-way are considered to be adjacent.” In footnote 1 for Table 4.16-38 on page 4.16-56, the DEIS further explains that the 100 foot distance was measured from the centerline of each corridor. The Region believes that the 100 feet should have been measured from the edge of clearing for the corridor right-of-way for a more accurate inventory of aquatic resources and a better evaluation of adverse impacts.<sup>8</sup>

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With respect to vernal pools, on page 4.14-16, the DEIS states that, “[p]otential vernal pools do not receive protection under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act Regulations, *or under any other state or federal wetlands protection laws*” (emphasis added). This statement is inaccurate, as pools that do not meet state certification criteria may still be subject to federal jurisdiction and regulated under the CWA. Also, it appears that for the purposes of the alternatives analysis and impact evaluation, only those vernal pools within 100 feet of the centerline for an alternative were evaluated. Although the Region recognizes that time constraints and resource limitations make it challenging, it should be recognized that in order to properly assess the impacts of each alternative upon vernal pool resources, all pools (whether certified or potential) within at least 300 feet of the limit of disturbance (not the centerline) should be identified and evaluated.<sup>9</sup> Existing literature, especially Calhoun and deMaynadier (2008) and Klemens and Calhoun (2002)<sup>10</sup>, suggest that

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<sup>8</sup> The Region made this point at a meeting of the Wetlands Working Group. See meeting summary of April 16, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> This wider zone for identification and evaluation of vernal pool impacts would only apply to portions of the alternatives corridors that are not currently bordered by development or other intensive land uses.

<sup>10</sup> Calhoun, A.J.K. and P.G. deMaynadier (editors). 2008. Science and Conservation of Vernal Pools in Northeastern North America. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.

Calhoun, A.J.K. and M.W. Klemens. 2002. Best development practices: conserving pool-breeding amphibians in



distances up to 750 feet may be relevant in some landscapes. For the situation here, 300 feet (see footnote 6) is clearly reasonable.<sup>11</sup> Field work in 2008 and 2009 identified several pools which had not previously been identified, and certified several pools previously classified as potential using state guidelines. It would be helpful for the FEIS to include a description of the methodology that was used for locating and documenting vernal pools in the field in order to better understand the possibility that additional pools may have been missed.

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Sections 4.16.3.3 – 4.16.3.5 present quantifications of impacts to aquatic resources according to both state and federal laws. The quantifications are confusing. Except for the explanation on page 4.16-61 that equates the Commonwealth's bordering vegetated wetlands category with wetlands under Clean Water Act section 404, little else is clear. For instance, in Table 4.16-57, it is unclear if the Commonwealth's category of bordering land subject to flooding (BLSF) also would be jurisdictional, either in whole or in part, under CWA section 404. The FEIS needs to clearly present impact acreage and characterizations separately according to Massachusetts law, then for the federal Clean Water Act.

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As explained above under Section IV, the Region believes that the information describing the logistical challenges for constructing and operating the Attleboro Alternatives (electric and diesel) renders them impracticable. Therefore, we do not address adverse impacts for the Attleboro Alternatives, concentrating instead on the Rapid Bus, Whittenton, and Stoughton Alternatives.

#### **A. Water Quality Impacts (Section 230.10(b))**

The DEIS, particularly Section 4.17 (Water Resources), presents an adequate evaluation of water quality impacts that could result from construction and operation of the Rapid Bus, Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives. The discussion and conclusions are sound. However, the Region recommends that MassDOT confirm the classifications identified for the water bodies described in section 4.17.2.2 with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ("MassDEP"). For example, we believe that MassDEP considers the Assonet River to be Class SA, not Class B. Water quality classifications can be a confusing area because some water bodies change names as they flow through different towns. Though this will likely not change the conclusions drawn on the impacts to water resources, addressing this point in the FEIS would ensure an accurate assessment of water quality impacts.

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#### **B. Significance of Impacts (Section 230.10(c))**

##### **1. Direct Impacts**

##### **a. Rapid Bus**

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residential and commercial developments in the northeastern U.S. MCA Technical Paper No. 5. Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx, NY.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 8.



As shown in Table 4.16-57 of the DEIS (page 4.16-97), the Rapid Bus Alternative would result in approximately 21.5 acres of wetlands being directly filled. In addition, approximately 2.1 acres of vernal pools would be filled, bringing the total acreage for direct filling to wetlands and other waters of the U.S. to approximately 23.6 acres. This alternative would require modifications to 13 existing stream crossings. In addition to permanent impacts, there would be approximately 8.7 acres of temporary direct impacts to wetlands, 1.4 acres of temporary direct impact to vernal pools, and temporary alteration of 1,120 linear feet of "bank."<sup>12</sup> The filling would result from numerous, mostly small fills along both sides of the widened and improved roadways. A few larger fills would occur within the medians of Interstate 93 and State Route 24, and within the confines of existing interchanges along State Route 24.

L-068.50

While the acreage for both wetlands filled and total waters filled would be greatest under this alternative, the Region believes that the severity of the impact upon the affected wetlands and waters would be less than that associated with the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives. The existing roadways that would be widened and upgraded are heavily used roadways along mostly developed corridors where the adjoining wetlands and waters are, in numerous locations, already degraded. The small, incremental filling of wetlands and other waters along those existing roadways that would occur at numerous locations would have mostly minor to moderate adverse impacts to those aquatic resources. Some water quality maintenance functions would be affected, as would small amounts of wildlife habitat. As described in section 4.15.3.3, the Rapid Bus Alternative would have the fewest adverse impacts upon rare wetland dependent wildlife species. Individually and cumulatively, the Region would not be seriously concerned about these impacts. Still, these adverse impacts would require some degree of compensatory mitigation to address their harmful effects.

L-068.51

#### **b. Stoughton and Whittenton**

As shown in Table 4.16-57 of the DEIS (page 4.16-97), the Stoughton Alternative (diesel or electric) would fill approximately 11.9 acres of wetlands and 1.7 acres of Outstanding Resource Waters, for a total of 13.6 acres of direct wetland fill. This total does not include an uncalculated amount of fill in wetlands identified as "Other Federal" but not quantified (see Tables 4.16-3 to 4.16-7 and 4.16-18 to 4.16-22). Approximately 68% (8.1 acres) of the impacts to wetlands would occur to forested wetlands. In addition to the permanent impacts there would be 12.6 acres of temporary direct impact to wetlands and 2.6 acres of temporary direct impact to vernal pools. There are 132 stream crossings (68 in the Southern Triangle); 34 of the affected streams are perennial. It is unclear whether impacts or modifications would occur to all of these crossings, as the DEIS states that exact impacts will be calculated during the final design process once a LEDPA is determined. This alternative also would alter approximately 3,480 linear feet of "bank, plus an additional 1,216 linear feet of temporary impacts to bank." *Id.*

L-068.52

<sup>12</sup> As explained more generally immediately above, it is unclear what portion of this figure represents areas that would come under the jurisdiction of CWA section 404, or whether this portion is represented by another category of resource impact. Again, the FEIS needs to explicitly and separately clarify jurisdictional waters of the U.S.



As shown in Table 4.16-57 of the DEIS (page 4.16-97), the Whittenton Alternative (diesel or electric) would fill approximately 10.3 acres of wetlands and about 1 acre of Outstanding Resource Waters, for a total of approximately 11.3 acres of direct wetland fill. This total does not include an uncalculated amount of fill in wetlands identified as "Other Federal" but not quantified (see Tables 4.16-3 to 4.16-7). Approximately 66% (6.9 acres) of direct fill would occur in forested wetlands. In addition to the permanent impacts there would be 10.4 acres of temporary direct impact to wetlands and 1.3 acres of temporary direct impact to vernal pools. The number of stream crossings is unspecified, but there would be at least 68 within the Southern Triangle. This alternative also would alter the same approximately 3,480 linear feet of bank, plus 1,216 feet of temporary bank impact as the Stoughton Alternative. *Id.*

L-068.53

Both the Stoughton and the Whittenton corridors would pass through the Hockomock Swamp, which represents one of the few remaining bioreserves in southern New England that provide enough contiguous habitat to support area sensitive wildlife in a safe and stable condition. EPA designated the Hockomock Swamp as a Priority Wetland based on its high quality characteristics (including wildlife habitat value) and vulnerability to environmental degradation in September, 1987. The Commonwealth designated it an Area of Critical Environmental Concern ("ACEC") in 1990. The designation document states "The Hockomock Swamp clearly is unique in all of Massachusetts. It is the largest vegetated freshwater wetland in Massachusetts. Its significance is enhanced by the fact that so many resource features are present in this area - wetlands, floodplains, rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, extensive wildlife and rare and endangered species and natural areas, regional aquifers, farmlands, historic and archaeological resources, and scenic views and landscapes. The uniqueness of the habitat of the Hockomock area cannot be overstated."<sup>13</sup> In addition, the Stoughton corridor would pass through the ecologically significant Pine Swamp, which is an Atlantic White Cedar wetland that supports a state-listed butterfly. The direct permanent and temporary adverse impacts to these important aquatic resources and to other wetlands and streams in the corridor, would, in the Region's view, be substantial and more severe than those associated with the Rapid Bus Alternative.

## **2. Secondary Impacts**

### **a. Aquatic Resources**

Secondary impacts are effects on an aquatic ecosystem that are associated with a discharge of dredged or fill materials, but do not result from the actual placement of the dredged or fill material. The DEIS (page 4.16-63) correctly defines secondary impacts and provides an accurate generic discussion of the types of secondary impacts that must be considered. The DEIS explains that along existing active rail lines (e.g., the Fall River Secondary), secondary impacts would likely be "negligible" because "reconstruction of the right-of-way ... would not result in additional fragmentation of aquatic habitat because the existing embankment would be re-used and existing culverts and bridges would be replaced in-kind." Generally, the Region agrees and is less concerned about secondary adverse impacts to adjoining wetlands and water bodies where there are existing,

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/designations/hock\\_des.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/designations/hock_des.pdf), at 7-8.



active rails lines. In contrast, the Region is greatly concerned about secondary adverse impacts to aquatic resources along those portions of the Stoughton and Wittenton corridors where no embankment exists or where a narrow embankment has been abandoned for decades and the forest canopy now is mostly unbroken. Section 4.14 on Biodiversity, Wildlife and Vegetation, presents a thorough description and reasonable evaluation of secondary adverse impacts upon aquatic resources and wetland dependent wildlife. Still, we believe that the evaluation is lacking adequate detail in a few areas, as explained below.

L-068.54

Along portions of the rail corridors where we are more concerned, examples of secondary impacts that may result from this project include downstream changes in hydrology and water quality, decreased primary productivity due to removal of vegetation, and habitat fragmentation and degradation. Degradation of habitat specifically refers to a decrease in the health or ecological integrity of the existing habitat. Edge effect can be viewed as a reduction in habitat integrity at the boundary of a transportation corridor caused by construction disturbance, vegetation clearing, storm water runoff, or other degrading factors that extend into the natural habitat. For example, the DEIS explains that, “[i]n locations where single track sections are proposed (much of the Southern Triangle, sections of the Stoughton Line and along the Whittenton Branch), the canopy gap will vary between approximately 40 to 80 feet in width. In locations where double track sections are proposed, the canopy gap will vary between 60 to 100 feet in width.” Page 4.16-80 of the DEIS notes that “[c]anopy clearing would be required along the right-of-way where the elevated trestle would be located within the Hockomock Swamp to accommodate additional height requirements associated with the trestle. Canopy clearing generally occurs within upland forest, though portions would occur in wetland resources. Canopy clearing would not result in additional impacts to wetland resources as this work would occur in uplands.” We disagree with this assessment of the potential for additional impacts. In forested wetlands with a closed or nearly closed canopy, e.g., substantial portions of the Stoughton alignment through the Hockomock Swamp, even an opening of 40 feet could set in motion serious immediate and longer term secondary adverse impacts to adjoining wetlands and wetland dependent wildlife. The FEIS should provide a more thorough and specific evaluation of the potential for adverse impacts from canopy clearing, especially across the Hockomock Swamp.

Several types of environmental harm would result from the construction and operation of the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives. Outright loss of between approximately 10 – 12 acres of wetland habitat would occur. Adjacent aquatic and wetland habitats would be damaged by sedimentation during construction. Even with standard erosion and sediment control measures, decades of experience with these types of projects shows that it is common that physical barriers/controls are not maintained as well as they should be and damage to adjoining aquatic resources occurs. In addition, and especially in forested and shrub wetlands, loss of canopy cover would increase surface and water temperatures and alter light penetration into adjoining areas. Surface water circulation and flow patterns could be altered, possibly drying out some wetlands or making others wetter, both of which would result in substantial changes to plant and wildlife communities. Interruption and/or other decreases of the nutrient production and export functioning of some of these wetland systems to be filled or affected could occur, damaging downstream aquatic

L-068.55



communities. All of these adverse impacts would contribute to fragmentation effects that would be caused by both these rail alternatives, and lead to an overall decrease in the productivity and functioning of the affected aquatic systems. The nature, extent, permanence, and severity of these types of secondary impacts need to be more fully evaluated in the FEIS. L-068.55

With respect to methods employed to evaluate secondary impacts, on page 4.14-20, the DEIS explains that only vernal pools located within 100 feet of the centerline for an alternative were analyzed. For the Stoughton Electric Alternative, Table 4.14-13 shows that 91 vernal pools would be adversely affected by direct and secondary impacts. For the Whittenton Electric Alternative, Table 4.14-16 shows that 68 vernal pools would be adversely affected by direct and secondary impacts. However, and as explained above, that 100 foot distance is inadequate to properly assess secondary adverse impacts. It is likely that additional pools that would be affected by secondary adverse impacts from construction and operation of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives were not included in the evaluation. For example, on page 4.14-36, the DEIS explains that for the Stoughton Alternative, “[t]here are several other clusters of vernal pools near the Stoughton Line, located outside of the 100-foot buffer, including a cluster of certified and potential vernal pools south of the North Easton station site; a cluster of certified vernal pools in Easton, between Foundry Street and the utility corridor; a cluster of potential vernal pools north of Bridge Street in Raynham; and a cluster of potential vernal pools south of Pine Swamp in Raynham and Taunton. Vernal pools in the Hockomock Swamp found between Foundry Street and Raynham Park also support a large population of spotted turtles (*Clemmys guttata*), no longer a state-listed species but still an important biodiversity concern.” Impacts to these additional pools should be factored into the analysis to enable a thorough evaluation of each alternative so that the alternative that would be least damaging to aquatic resources can be identified.<sup>14</sup> L-068.56

#### **b. CAPS analysis**

Section 4.14 of the DEIS provides a comprehensive overview of biodiversity within the project study area. It also provides a useful discussion of several of the types of secondary impacts that can adversely affect biodiversity, i.e., fish and wildlife communities and plant communities. Beginning on page 4.14-68, the DEIS discusses the University of Massachusetts’ Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) model, which was used to assess both direct and secondary adverse impacts upon biodiversity for the Rapid Bus and each of the rail alternatives. As a landscape level approach for evaluating broad changes (i.e., secondary impacts) in biodiversity, the CAPS analysis is helpful for understanding longer-term biodiversity shifts that may occur.

On the other hand, we note that the CAPS model does not appear to be particularly useful when focusing on specific ground level features at a narrower scale. In the Summary Notes of Meeting for the South Coast Rail Wetlands Working Group from its April 16, 2009 meeting, the group discussed wetlands functional evaluation methods and the CAPS model specifically as a wildlife (or biodiversity) assessment method. A representative of Louis Berger, the Corps’ consultant, cautioned that CAPS has its limitation. He noted that functional assessment tools need to account L-068.57

<sup>14</sup> The same approach might also identify additional vernal pools along the Rapid Bus corridor that could be affected.



appropriately for incremental fills along existing corridors to avoid exaggerating factors such as fringe impacts, and to attribute higher value to affected wetlands as a unit. Whereas the CAPS model may better accomplish the second point with respect to treating wetlands as a unit or system, it does not appear to be sensitive enough to accurately evaluate incremental fills or particular ground features in specific locations. For example, the CAPS model results show no loss of Ecological Integrity Units (EIUs) for the Rapid Bus Alternative because, as the DEIS explains on page 4.14-99, “roadway geometry and other area changes associated with the Rapid Bus Alternative fall below the resolution of the CAPS model which operates at a landscape level of scale.” Further, Table 4.14-23 Loss of Index of Ecological Integrity Units, summarizes the CAPS model results for the four rail alternatives and the Rapid Bus. The results show a difference of 7.2 EIUs lost between the Stoughton Alternative with a trestle and without (456.9 IEUs v. 464.1 EIUs, respectively), which is surprisingly small. The difference for the Whittenton Alternative is the same. At several meetings of the Wetlands Working Group, it was widely agreed that a trestle was substantially advantageous for reducing adverse impacts to wildlife, especially to address the barrier effect of a solid fill rail bed. If relying on the CAPS model results, one would be hard pressed to reach the same conclusion. Finally, the CAPS model does not assess watershed level impacts and changes to, among other wetland functions, hydrologic flow (other than connectivity), nutrient production and export, or nutrient removal/retention/transformation.

L-068.57

Our point is that the CAPS results are helpful when considering broad landscape level biodiversity changes to the South Coast Rail project study area with an operating rail line and without, but are not especially useful in distinguishing adverse impacts among particular rail alternatives to inform a determination of the alternative that is least damaging to aquatic resources. We recommend that the FEIS clarify the relevance and importance of the CAPS model results.

### **3. Significance of Impacts**

As explained above, the Region seeks a variety of additional information about the extent, nature, and severity of direct and secondary adverse impacts to aquatic resources within the Stoughton and Whittenton rail corridors. Until we have evaluated that additional information, in combination with the information provided in chapter 5 of the DEIS (related to the cumulative effects on the aquatic ecosystem stemming from induced growth), we cannot reach conclusions regarding the significance of those adverse impacts and whether those alternatives could comply with section 230.10(c) of the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

L-068.58

## **VI. MINIMIZATION MEASURES AND COMPENSATORY MITIGATION**

For a permit application to comply with § 230.10(d) of the 404(b)(1) Guidelines, the proposal must include all appropriate and practicable steps to compensate for unavoidable impacts. Furthermore, where the adverse impacts from an alternative would cause or contribute to significant degradation of waters of the U.S., the compensatory mitigation plan must first prevent or offset the environmental damage to an extent sufficient to comply with § 230.10(c) of the Guidelines (i.e., the



net impacts must no longer be significant). Whether a mitigation plan succeeds in sufficiently reducing significant impacts normally depends upon the extent to which it replaces or offsets the harm to the aquatic environment from the project. In this case, the types of aquatic resources most severely damaged by direct and secondary impacts would be forested and shrub wetlands, and vernal pools. It is technically difficult to restore or create these habitats successfully, let alone replicate the juxtaposition of habitats that results in the high biodiversity of large portions of the project study area. Furthermore, there are myriad risks inherent in wetland restoration and especially creation that make these already difficult ventures more perilous. Among others, these risks include mistakes in project site analysis and engineering design; imperfect project implementation; and unforeseen natural events such as drought or severe storms. For example, the hydrology of forested and shrub wetlands is quite complex and difficult to duplicate. It would take at least several years to be able to make an initial judgment about whether an attempt to restore or create a forested wetland is successful; to establish a fully functioning system could require more than a decade. Moreover, we know of few instances of well-documented, persistent, and fully established forested wetland creation.

## 1. Minimization Measures

### a. Culvert Crossings

On page 4.16-60 of the DEIS, it notes that “[t]o the extent practicable, new or replaced culverts would be designed to comply with the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards. Where the stream crossing standards could not be met, stream crossings would be improved to the greatest extent practicable.” The DEIS notes on page 4.14-72 that the design of each culvert will be evaluated during the final design process to assess the potential effects on hydrology, stream flow, and fisheries. The Region supports these improvements to culverts for all stream crossings, regardless of the alternative selected.

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On page 4.16-70 of the DEIS, it notes that “reconstruction of the right-of-way associated with the New Bedford Main Line would not result in additional fragmentation of aquatic habitat because the existing embankment would be re-used and existing culverts and bridges would be replaced in-kind, subject to consideration of the need not to compromise wetland hydrology.” We strongly recommend that, when considering any stream crossings where concerns arise about adverse impacts to up- or down-gradient wetland hydrology, the FEIS specifically provide that MassDOT will, whenever practicable, utilize culvert designs that maintain hydrologic flows and improve wildlife movements across the ROW. Possibilities include dry culverts for wildlife passage, or constructing culverts with grade control devices at inlets.

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### b. Wildlife Passage

Page 4.14-98 of the DEIS explains the use of “turtle gates” as a construction period mitigation measure that may be used to allow small vertebrates to cross the right-of-way during critical breeding periods. In addition to the temporary use of turtle gates during construction, under-rail

L-068.61



troughs and other permanent features such as the “critter crossings” constructed on the MBTA Greenbush line should be fully considered where appropriate and practicable along the right-of-way. This feature is discussed on page 4.14-109 of the DEIS as a potential measure to minimize the direct and secondary impacts on biodiversity. Page 4.14-110 of DEIS explains that the wildlife crossings constructed along the MBTA Greenbush Line have been shown to be used by numerous wildlife species, reducing the barrier effect of the rail. The FEIS should include more detailed information about potential locations for and design of wildlife crossings for all the alternatives.

L-068.61

### **c. Trestle**

On page 3-66 and 3-67, the DEIS describes features of the Stoughton Alternative, including that “[a] trestle section is proposed in Easton and Raynham to minimize environmental impacts to the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern.” Elsewhere in the DEIS, it explains that the proposed trestle would be 8,500 feet long. Though the descriptions in the DEIS appear to include the trestle as a standard feature for the Stoughton Alternative, the FEIS should be explicit that the trestle is the only way the Stoughton (or Whittenton) Alternative would be considered and constructed. Furthermore, and again for the Stoughton Alternative, the Region believes that the FEIS should also include an evaluation of installing a trestle for the Pine Swamp crossing for the same reasons that the trestle is incorporated into the Hockomock Swamp crossing.

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On a related point, we did not see the issue of trestle maintenance and emergency access addressed within the DEIS. The FEIS should describe how maintenance and emergency access will be accomplished along the 1.6 mile long Hockomock Swamp trestle crossing, especially if additional filling would be needed to construct a permanent or temporary access road.

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## **2. Compensatory Mitigation**

On page 4.16-104 of the DEIS, the section on Mitigation Goals and Objectives states that, “[t]he quantity of estimated permanent impacts and the associated proposed mitigation goals that have been identified are presumed to be an overestimation attributed to the methodology used to perform wetland delineation along the alternatives ... It is expected that wetland impacts and the associated mitigation area requirements would decrease following field delineation.” The Region is less sanguine in this respect. While some aquatic resources may have been overestimated, it is likely that others have been missed or underestimated.

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In section 4.16.3.6, the DEIS describes federal and state requirements for compensatory mitigation, as well as a conceptual framework and approach for how MassDOT will develop a compensation plan once the LEDPA is determined. We generally agree with these descriptions.

L-068.65

However, it is premature to apply compensatory mitigation ratios and produce compensation requirements, as shown in Tables 4.16-60 through 4.16-65 for the rail and Rapid Bus Alternatives. As explained elsewhere in this Attachment, several issues remain to be addressed regarding the extent and nature of both direct and secondary adverse impacts and, more importantly, the severity



of those impacts. That additional information on adverse impacts will bear directly on not only the appropriate mitigation ratios, but also whether the extent, types and severity of adverse impacts from the alternatives, rail in particular, can be adequately compensated. L-068.65

In that vein, on pages 4.16-107 and 4.16-111, the DEIS notes that, “[t]he majority of all impacts would occur in areas of deciduous wooded swamp wetlands.” In addition, on page 4.16-106, the DEIS notes that, “[d]ue to the scale of this project, and the limited availability of restoration opportunities in eastern Massachusetts, it is likely that [compensatory] mitigation would be characterized as creation.” In light of the cautions we stress above regarding the risks and unproven record regarding wetland creation in general and forest wetland creation in particular, we believe that it will be especially challenging for MassDOT to develop an adequate compensation plan. L-068.66

## VIII. CONCLUSION

In summary, the Region agrees that the Attleboro Alternatives are impracticable and can be dismissed from further consideration. We understand that in the context of the basic project purpose, the Rapid Bus would not perform as well as the rail alternatives and that the Stoughton Alternatives would perform best. Nevertheless, the Rapid Bus, Stoughton, and Whittenton Alternatives all meet the basic project purpose, albeit to varying degrees, and all remain practicable at this time.

Based on the information we have reviewed to date, it appears that the Rapid Bus Alternative would be less environmentally damaging to the aquatic ecosystem than the remaining rail alternatives. We also have requested an assortment of additional information regarding direct and secondary impacts for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives, and the Region is unable to reach conclusions regarding adverse impacts for all the alternatives until we have evaluated that additional information.

With respect to adverse impacts, additional information regarding the presence and extent of aquatic resources is needed, as explained above. Further, again as explained above, additional evaluation of the scope, nature, and severity of direct and secondary adverse impacts needs to occur. Once that additional information is available and reviewed, the Region will be in a position to provide the Corps with its recommendation regarding the LEDPA.

Finally, and after the LEDPA is determined, substantive discussion can take place with respect to developing a comprehensive compensatory mitigation plan.

At this point, the Region has not reached a final conclusion with respect to compliance with the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, due to the need for the additional information identified herein. L-068.67



# Federal and State Elected Officials

<b>Page</b>	<b>Name</b>
1	State Representative Antonio Cabral
3	State Representative Geraldine Creedon, State Senator Brian Joyce, State Senator Thomas Kennedy and State Representative Angelo D'Emilia
4	State Representative William Galvin, State Senator Brian Joyce, and State Representative Louis Kafka
5	State Senator Brian Joyce
6	State Representative Robert Koczera
8	State Senator Mark Montigny
10	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell
11	State Representative Elizabeth Poirier
12	State Senator Michael Rodrigues
14	State Representative William Straus
16	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern



**From:** Merante, Mark (HOU) [Mark.Merante@mahouse.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 4:45 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; O'Shea, Aisling (ENV)  
**Cc:** Antonio Cabral  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail DEIR/DEIS Comments

May 25, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
 Army Corps of Engineers  
 696 Virginia Road  
 Concord, MA 01742-2751  
 VIA EMAIL: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
 attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
 Boston MA 02114  
 VIA EMAIL: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

Re: South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR)

Dear Sirs:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the United States Army Corps of Engineers' South Coast Rail DEIS/DEIR (the "Report"). As you know, this project is enormously important to my city, New Bedford, to all of southeastern Massachusetts and to our entire state's economic future.

As I understand it, the USACE's review of this project under 40 CFR Part 230 Section 404 and 33 CFR Part 320.4(a)(1) involves both an examination of the likely environmental impact of the project and a consideration of the project's purpose and need, described by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation in its application. I will leave to others qualified in environment science to comment on the Report's examination of the likely environmental impact and restrict my comments to the need for and public's interest in this project.

I approve of the Report's examination and agree with its findings. Southeastern Massachusetts has faced enormous challenges in recent years, as the economy in which its businesses and workers had operated rapidly evolved. As a result, New Bedford and Fall River continue to have some of the highest unemployment rates in New England. We retain excellent human and natural resources and local infrastructure but our economic growth has been severely constrained by our poor access to the engines of the new economy, centered in greater Boston. The overwhelming support for this project in the Southcoast and our sense of urgency that the project begin construction as soon as possible is a result of our confidence that we have all of the other necessary resources to achieve rapid economic growth, which would benefit both our region and our state, and to do so in a way that actually reduces our region's impact on the local and global environment.

E-061.01

Therefore, I want to urge you to proceed as quickly as possible to the issuance and adoption of a

E-061.02



Final EIS/EIR. I urge USACE to then move as quickly as possible to issue a Record of Decision and urge MEPA to move as quickly as possible issue a Certificate and Section 61 Finding for the project. As you know, even this initial environmental review process must be followed by further permitting and by the significant design work required for a project of this size and complexity. I cannot emphasize enough the immediate impact on Southeastern Massachusetts and the impact on the economy of our state overall, which the beginning of construction would have.

E-061.02

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Report. If I can be of any assistance as you complete your review, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

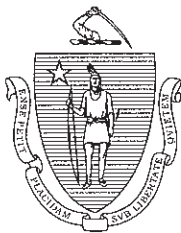


ANTONIO F.D. CABRAL

*State Representative*, 13th Bristol District

Chairman, Committee on Bonding, State Assets and Capital Expenditures





# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MA 02133-1020

**GERALDINE M. CREEDON**  
REPRESENTATIVE  
11<sup>TH</sup> PLYMOUTH

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 237  
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FAX: (617) 722-2598

Committees:  
House Ways and Means  
Public Service  
State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

April 12, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

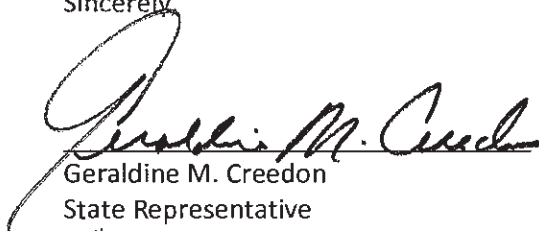
Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann

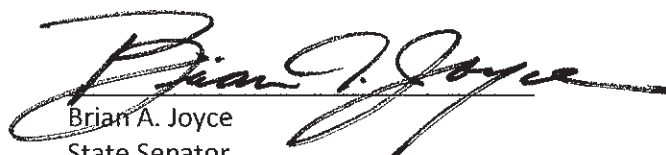
Several concerned constituents have contacted our offices regarding the amount of time allowed for comment on the DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement) for the South Coast Rail project. Due to the complex nature of the recent report, we request that the comment period for this document be extended an additional 60 days. We believe that our constituents should have a fair opportunity to thoroughly review and consider their comments carefully, and the original 60 day timetable does not afford them that possibility. This extension is necessary so that this 2,500 page report may be properly reviewed and commented on by all interested parties.

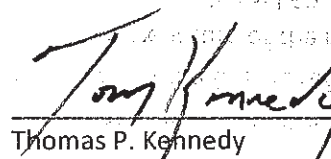
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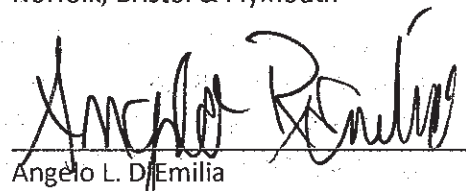
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Geraldine M. Creedon  
State Representative  
11<sup>th</sup> Plymouth

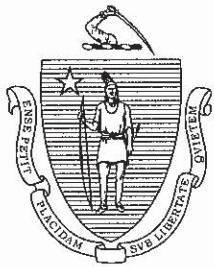
  
Brian A. Joyce  
State Senator  
Norfolk, Bristol & Plymouth

  
Thomas P. Kennedy  
State Senator  
Second Plymouth & Bristol

  
Angelo L. D'Emilia  
State Representative  
8<sup>th</sup> Plymouth

APR 14 11 REG DIV





*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*House of Representatives*  
*State House, Boston 02133-1054*

**WILLIAM C. GALVIN**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

6TH NORFOLK DISTRICT  
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 448  
TEL. (617) 722-2582  
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CHAIRMAN

House Committee on Personnel and Administration

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord MA 01742-2751

April 5, 2011

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

Due to the complex nature of the recent report your organization released regarding the South Coast Rail, and the fact that it affects so many individuals and communities, we respectfully request that the comment period for this document be extended to 120 days. We feel this extra time is necessary so that this 2,500 page report may be properly reviewed and commented on by those interested in this project. While we acknowledge that the reviewing of these comments by your organization is an essential part of "next steps", we firmly believe that our constituents should have a fair opportunity for review and submittal, and two months is not sufficient to read and comment on such a substantial document.

L-001.01

Sincerely,

*William C. Galvin*  
**William C. Galvin**  
State Representative

*Brian A. Joyce*  
**Brian A. Joyce**  
State Senator

*Louis L. Kafka*  
**Louis L. Kafka**  
State Representative

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Cc: Kristin Egan, South Coast Rail



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**From:** Pattee, Emma (SEN) [Emma.Pattee@masenate.gov]

**Sent:** Thursday, March 24, 2011 4:56 PM

**To:** SCREIS, NAE

**Subject:** South Coast Rail Hearing

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I wanted to reach out to you because Senator Joyce has many constituents in his district who are very interested in the South Coast Rail project. Because of that, Senator Joyce was wondering if there was any way to schedule a public hearing in Canton, Easton or Stoughton.

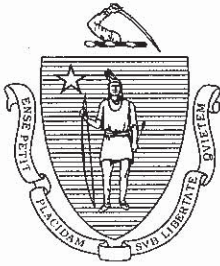
E-004.01

Thank you so much for your assistance,

Emma

Emma L. Pattee  
Communications Director  
Office of Senator Brian A. Joyce  
State House, Room 109-D  
Boston, MA 02133  
T: (617) 722-1643  
F: (617) 722-1522





# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

## **ROBERT M. KOCZERA**

### **REPRESENTATIVE**

11TH BRISTOL DISTRICT  
119 JARRY STREET  
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02745  
HOME: (508) 998-8041

### **Committees**

Ways and Means

Economic Development and Emerging Technologies

Health Care Financing

Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

ROOM 448, STATE HOUSE

TEL. (617) 722-2582

FAX (617) 722-2879

Robert.Koczera@mahouse.gov

May 10, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I am writing to express my strong support for the extension of commuter rail service via the Stoughton route to the cities of New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton.

Based on the following criteria: project purpose; practicability; environmental impact; ridership; travel times, vehicle miles traveled and air quality, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) concludes that the Stoughton route provides the best service to the SouthCoast while having the least impact on the environment. Also, the Stoughton route is the most practicable. It is the most direct route to Boston and the less congested of the alternative routes proposed. In addition, the Stoughton route provides the most stops at locations thereby providing more of an opportunity for residents of the region to obtain jobs.

L-021.01

The extension of commuter rail service to the cities indicated above is critical to the economic growth of the southeast region and the Commonwealth. Rail service will enhance regional mobility, support smart growth development strategies in southeast communities, and create greater connectivity between the region and Boston, a cultural and economic hub for New England. Also, rail service to the southeast offers young professionals currently residing in Boston affordable housing opportunities and a reasonable commute that will enhance economic growth in the Commonwealth.

L-021.02

National policies emphasizing energy conservation and alternative sources of energy strengthens the need to provide passenger rail service to the southeast region as an alternative to the congested highways on Routes 24 and 93 leading to Boston. Restoration of commuter rail service along the Stoughton route to Boston provides greater benefits to the environment relative to air quality and traffic congestion as well as significant socioeconomic benefits to the region and state.

L-021.03

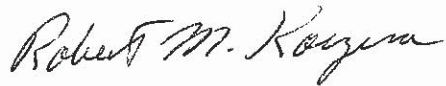
MAY11/11 REG DIV

Anacheka-Nasemann  
May 10, 2011  
Page Two

In conclusion, I urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the decision making process for the South Coast Rail Project by issuing the Final Environment Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/FEIR) and the Record of Decision (DOR) as soon as possible.

L-021.04

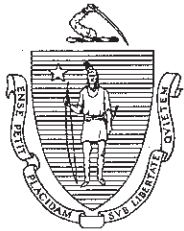
Sincerely yours,



**Robert M. Koczera**  
*State Representative*  
*Eleventh Bristol District*

CC: Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA





COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
**THE GENERAL COURT**  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

SENATOR MARK MONTIGNY, CHAIRMAN  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON POST AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT  
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 312-A  
TEL (617) 722-1440  
FAX (617) 722-1068

May 24, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). As an elected official, it is my responsibility to advocate for projects that will improve the lives of those I represent, and nothing is more important to those in my district than ensuring the return of commuter rail service to South Coast for the first time since 1958. Since I was first elected, I have worked hard to advocate, advance, and secure funds for this project. The debate has been waged and hearings have been held. Now it is time for action.

Given the amount of time that has lapsed since this project was first conceived, I am deeply concerned about the lack of progress in recent years. It would be my hope that the final Environmental Impact Report be published quickly, identifying the least environmentally damaging practicable route, maximizing the speed and effectiveness of the new line, and allowing construction to begin as soon as possible.

L-044.01

After review of the DEIS, it appears that the Stoughton Alternative and the Whittenton Alternative are the most beneficial to meeting the goal of providing the vital link for commuters from the South Coast and to the City of Boston. Both alternatives cross the abandoned rail road grades through the Hockomock Swamp, so the environmental impacts would be similar. The choice between two alternatives comes down to a decision of which one will provide the fastest and most reliable service to South Station.

L-044.02

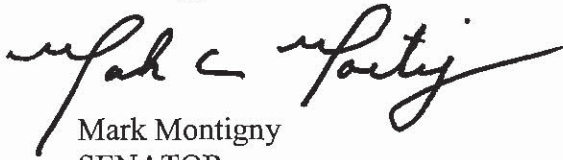
MAY31'11 REG DIV

In many ways this is an economic justice issue. An alternative that adds even a few additional minutes to the commute could make the new rail line that much less appealing to people who might use it as standard mode of transportation. The longer commute time of the Whittenton Variation could be justifiable if there was a clear-cut and significant difference between the environmental impacts of it and Stoughton alternative, but the magnitude of the difference between them is minimal. Therefore, it appears that the Stoughton Alternative is the best choice for the commuters that will utilize the South Coast rail extension.

L-044.03

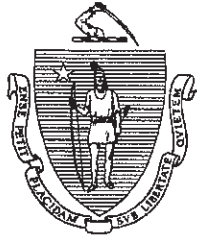
My district, and the South Coast, has too much to offer for this project to be delayed any longer. I thank the Army Corps for its attention and analysis of this project and ask for a final Environmental Impact Statement as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Montigny', written in a cursive style.

Mark Montigny  
SENATOR





# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

**Shaunna L. O'Connell**

State Representative

3<sup>rd</sup> Bristol District

Room 237

(617) 722-2305

Shaunna.O'Connell@mahouse.gov

House Ways and Means  
Committee

May 10, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann,

As the State Representative for the city of Taunton, I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the city's best interests regarding the proposed South Coast Rail project.

We are pleased that the route preferred by the Mass DOT is the direct Stoughton Route, as this is also the preferred route of the city of Taunton. This is the most direct route from Boston to the communities on the South Coast. It is also the least disruptive route through the city of Taunton, as it only crosses over five streets at grade. L-023.01

We do not support any other route for the proposed South Coast Rail and are adamantly opposed to the so-called "Whittenton route," as this would create 14 street crossings at grade. L-023.02

The crossings on the Whittenton route would be relatively close together in congested areas of the city, creating a disaster with regard to traffic flow. Another grave concern is the inability of public safety vehicles to reach their destinations in an emergency, creating a public safety hazard.

The city has already acquired property on Arlington Street that abuts the site of the proposed downtown station. We understand the state is going to examine our ability to support the train station. It is anticipated that the state would assist the city in making improvements around the Dean Street/Arlington Street intersections. L-023.03

The community is excited to be part of the enhanced rail service to southeastern Massachusetts and looks forward to the many economic benefits the South Coast Rail may bring as we seek to revitalize the economy and communities in this region. L-023.04

The city of Taunton looks forward to working closely with Mass DOT throughout the proposed rail project to ensure the best results for the city and the state.

Sincerely,

Shaunna O'Connell  
State Representative

MAY11'11 REG DIV

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**From:** Hyland, Elaine (HOU) [Elaine.Hyland@mahouse.gov]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 26, 2011 1:25 PM

**To:** SCREIS, NAE; O'Shea, Aisling (ENV)

**Cc:** Egan, Kristina (DOT)

**Subject:** South Coast Rail DEIS/DEIR (Rep. Poirier's Office)

Dear Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Richard Sullivan:

Rep. Elizabeth Poirier (14<sup>th</sup> Bristol District) asked that I respond to you on her behalf regarding the comment period for the South Coast Rail DEIS/DEIR.

Rep. Poirier indicated that she is happy with the chosen route through Stoughton. Also, she would like to mention how pleased she is in how thorough Kristina Egan has been in all her efforts regarding this project. | E-053.01

If you have any other questions or need to discuss anything further with Rep. Poirier, you can contact her at 617-722-2100.

Thank you,

*Elaine*

ELAINE M. HYLAND  
Research Analyst  
Rep. Elizabeth A. Poirier  
14th Bristol District  
617-722-2100 x8132





# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS STATE SENATE  
STATE HOUSE BOSTON, MA 02133

**SENATOR MICHAEL J. RODRIGUES**

1<sup>st</sup> Bristol & Plymouth District  
Room 213-B, State House  
Tel: (617) 722-1114

[Michael.Rodrigues@masenate.gov](mailto:Michael.Rodrigues@masenate.gov)

**CHAIRMAN:**

Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities

**VICE-CHAIRMAN:**

Labor and Workforce Development

**MEMBER:**

Community Development & Small Business  
Elder Affairs  
Financial Services  
Higher Education  
State Administration & Regulatory Oversight

May 6, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
Attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02114

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2754

Dear Secretary Sullivan & Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I write to provide comments on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report. For well over a decade, the potential impact the reintroduction of the passenger rail on the SouthCoast has been studied as part of local, regional and statewide planning efforts, and many potential benefits have been identified. The SouthCoast is very unique in that it is one of the fastest growing areas within the Commonwealth. This area has tremendous potential to grow enormously in economic development. Improved transportation access could be a vehicle for this growth, development, and job creation.

E-025.01

The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a fifty mile radius of Boston without rail transit service. This rail service would provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the Commonwealth. The current highway network connecting the SouthCoast to the Boston area is inadequate for the needs of today, causing extensive traffic congestion, significant safety concerns and negatively effecting air quality, with expectations for even greater congestion in the future. The SouthCoast rail extension could help to mitigate some of this traffic growth in the region. The rail would strengthen the SouthCoast's economic links to the Greater Boston area and other satellite urban centers within the metro region. Furthermore, the rail access expands the SouthCoast's potential labor market and is particularly attractive to high-end management and professional employees.

E-025.02

In the past, commuter rail access has been a key factor in major development and redevelopment projects across the nation, and has consistently lead to increased property values in areas surrounding the train stations both nationally and internationally.

Essentially, the commuter rail could aid the growing tourism industry in the SouthCoast by providing visitors to the state with another means of transportation to experience the SouthCoast's many natural resources, cultural institutions and other amenities.

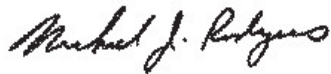
E-025.03

I strongly support the Commuter rail expanding to the SouthCoast. The local SouthCoast delegation has been coordinating with the State for over three years on the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the project itself. I urge the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This project is extremely important to our region. My constituents have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for over two decades and are anxious for this process to be completed so that we may move onto the next critical stage of the project.

E-025.04

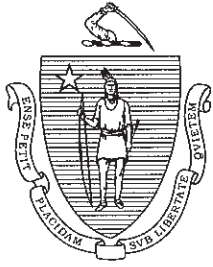
Thank you. I appreciate your consideration of my views regarding this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Rodrigues". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Rodrigues  
State Senator





*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*House of Representatives*  
*State House, Boston 02133-1054*

WILLIAM M. STRAUS  
REPRESENTATIVE  
10TH BRISTOL DISTRICT  
ROOM 134  
TEL: (617) 722-2400

COMMITTEE  
Chairman  
Transportation

DISTRICT OFFICE  
Tel: (508) 992-1260  
William.Straus@MAhouse.gov

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

May 23, 2011

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

As the House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation and as State Representative for the 10<sup>th</sup> Bristol District, which encompasses the towns of Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed South Coast Rail project and the South Coast Rail Project's recommendation to build the so-called Stoughton alternative.

L-041.01

The South Coast Rail will provide enormous benefit to those individuals within my district and the surrounding area, as it will present a long-awaited, viable public transit service to Boston for a region and a population that currently lacks access to practical public transit options. In addition, the South Coast Rail will provide a much-needed boost to the local economy by promoting complementary development projects along the route.

L-041.02

The Stoughton alternative recommendation is based on extended research and a variety of calculated assessments, including cost considerations, travel times, environmental impact concerns, and potential ridership numbers along each of the proposed routes. Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation were briefed on the South Coast Rail project March 21, 2011 and the determination by the South Coast Rail Project and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) that the Stoughton alternative was the preferred option. The Stoughton alternative decision was clearly outlined at the time of the briefing and continues to remain, in my opinion, the preferred option.

L-041.03

I am aware of the recent public hearings, including those in Easton and Mansfield, where the public has voiced concerns about the potential negative impact of the Stoughton alternative on their neighborhoods. Although I appreciate and understand these concerns, I remain convinced that the Stoughton alternative is the solution that presents the fewest negative impacts on the surrounding

L-041.04

MAY26'11 REG DIV

environment, and constitutes a return of a mass transit to a corridor and landscape where it existed for decades. L-041.04

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my comments. I would be happy to discuss this further and in greater detail should you be interested. Additionally, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 722-2400.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Straus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William M. Straus  
State Representative



# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 26, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.,  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann & Secretary Sullivan,

We write to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). To facilitate efficient use of government resources and to expedite the environmental review process, we also request that the Corps consult with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office to establish a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) that identifies one route – the Stoughton alternative – for further study. We believe this document should address reasonable outstanding issues raised by the public and/or reviewing agencies during the current comment period.

L-086.01

We also ask that the Corps not extend the comment period beyond the two months provided, ending May 27. MassDOT has conducted a wide-ranging and thorough civic engagement process, involving all of the state and federal environmental regulatory agencies in a four-year process. In addition, MassDOT posted technical reports that form the basis for the report in 2009, and all of the data collection and associated methodologies have been available for agency and public review for over a year.

L-086.02

As the environmental process moves into the next phase - the development of the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement - we urge the Corps to prepare this document within a year. We also request that, after MEPA issues a Certificate, the Corps publish a schedule for completing the FEIS, selecting the LEDPA, and issuing the Record of Decision. We understand that the schedule is partially dependent on

L-086.03

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
The Honorable Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
May 26, 2011  
Page 2

MassDOT providing necessary data, so we ask that the Corps coordinate with MassDOT in the development and publication of the schedule. L-086.03

Since the announcement of commuter rail expansion to the South Coast, we have wholeheartedly supported this exciting opportunity to restore passenger rail service to Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton. These are the only three cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by commuter rail stations. In restoring this service, the Commonwealth would be catalyzing nearly half a billion dollars in economic development every year. L-086.04

With the construction of the proposed Whales's Tooth station in New Bedford, the project will revitalize New Bedford's waterfront through the construction of a multi-modal green station using renewable energy technologies. It will connect area buses, ferry service, future passenger rail, and house a "one-stop" career center, while building a signature pedestrian and bicycle bridge that will be a New Bedford landmark and connect neighborhoods to the waterfront. Likewise, the proposed stations in Fall River will open under-utilized land along the waterfront for development and will stimulate a local economy that has been hard hit in recent times. L-086.05

In addition, the South Coast Rail project will create new jobs and infuse new life into our older, struggling industrial cities. Residents of southeastern Massachusetts will be able to access new jobs and services in the Boston area – jobs and services that many low-income residents cannot currently access. Boston-area residents, in turn, will be able to more easily take advantage of affordable housing along the South Coast. L-086.06

Of the options under consideration, we believe that the Stoughton alternative offers the best balance of transportation benefits, economic development, and environmental impacts. As the Draft Environmental Impact Statement shows, the Stoughton route meets the project purpose with the least environmental damage. Rail trip time is significantly shorter than Rapid Bus, and a direct Stoughton route is the fastest option. As you know, trip time for passengers is a critical consideration in determining the best alternative. The shorter travel time will attract more riders and take more vehicles off the roads, improving regional mobility. The success of the South Coast Rail initiative will indeed depend on attracting and sustaining new rail passengers who are looking for a quicker transit alternative to travel to the metropolitan Boston area. L-086.07

In that regard, we also believe that the Stoughton Electric Alternative is the best option available. At the same time that we are committing ourselves to investing in the next great transportation project in Massachusetts, we should also be investing in an energy source that is sustainable into the future. With electric trains, we are giving the rail line the flexibility to switch to an alternative source of energy that may present itself down the L-086.08



Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
The Honorable Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
May 26, 2011  
Page 3

road, including wind and solar. The Electric Alternatives travel times are noticeably shorter than their diesel counterparts, which again will attract and sustain new passengers along the rail corridor. At a time when we are looking to curb our carbon footprint wherever possible, we should not ignore this opportunity to cut emissions. At the same time, we urge the Corps to allow for the diesel alternative to be built first with a commitment from the state to convert the line to electric as resources allow.

L-086.08

Given the cost difference between diesel and electric, a phased approach may be the most practical. With respect to the natural environment in the project area, the Stoughton alternatives have less impact on wetlands than the Rapid Bus and Attleboro options. Of the impacts, 1.8 of Hockomock Swamp acres are considered an "Area of Critical Environmental Concern," and consist primarily of lost wetlands that have formed on the former rail bed.

L-086.09

The project includes relocating a stream currently on the rail bed back to its natural channel, which will create ecological benefits. Moreover, the Commonwealth has committed to constructing an elevated trestle through the swamp, which will facilitate the movement of animals across the rail alignment. While there are potential impacts to threatened and endangered species, we believe that, in coordination with regulatory agencies, the project can and will take the utmost care to avoid and mitigate these impacts. We also suggest that mitigation for biodiversity impacts be included for development in the FEIS/FEIR.

L-086.10

The Attleboro route fails operationally, so it is not practicable. It also has a higher cost per rider. Fixing these problems would involve adding a third and fourth track to parts of the heavily-travelled Northeast Corridor. Adding these tracks would amount to more than double the cost of the Stoughton direct alternative. We do not feel that this would be a wise use of federal or state dollars.

L-086.11

The Whittenton alternative, while superior to the Rapid Bus and the Attleboro rail alternatives, does not appropriately serve the people of New Bedford and Fall River. For example, these residents would experience a longer trip time (by over 10 minutes each way). This longer commute time might arguably be justifiable if there were significant differences between the environmental impacts of the Whittenton and Stoughton alternatives. But there are not any significant differences. Moreover, the Stoughton alternative provides greater air quality and climate benefits.

L-086.12

In determining the alternative to study in the FEIS/FEIR, we urge the Corps and MEPA to take a holistic approach when weighing the alternatives against one another. We are confident that the Stoughton alternative is the best one.

L-086.13

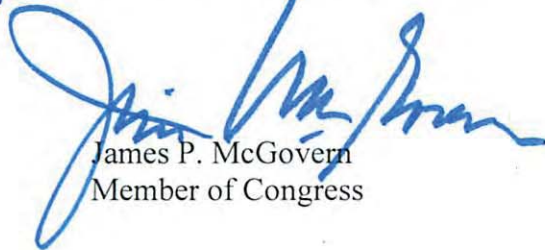
Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
The Honorable Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
May 26, 2011  
Page 4

We appreciate the extraordinary work that the Corps has done to date, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry  
United States Senator



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Barney Frank  
Member of Congress



# Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office

Page	Name
1	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*  
*100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900*  
*Boston, MA 02114*

Deval L. Patrick  
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Richard K. Sullivan Jr.  
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000  
Fax: (617) 626-1181  
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

June 29, 2011

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/STATEMENT

PROJECT NAME : South Coast Rail Project  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : South Coast Region  
PROJECT WATERSHED : Buzzards Bay, Taunton River, Narragansett Bay,  
Mount Hope Bay, Neponset River, Ten Mile River,  
Boston Harbor, Charles River  
EEA NUMBER : 14346  
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : March 23, 2011

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62I) and Section 11.07 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (DEIR/S) submitted for this project **adequately and properly complies with MEPA**. The Proponent, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) should submit a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) in accordance with the Scope below. As was the case with the DEIR/S, MassDOT may adopt the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which is being prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as its FEIR and submit a combined Final EIR/EIS for MEPA review, as long as the FEIS meets the Scope below.

The South Coast Rail project involves development of a public transit system to connect the cities of Fall River and New Bedford to Boston and to create regional transit interconnections among the south coast communities. Fall River and New Bedford are historically underserved areas with respect to public transportation options. This project is a priority transportation initiative of the Patrick Administration and is a component of MassDOT's efforts to increase transit access throughout the Commonwealth. In conjunction with the rail project, MassDOT together with the communities and regional planning agencies, have developed the South Coast



Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan. This Corridor Plan aims to manage both the projected growth in the region under business as usual conditions and the induced growth associated with this project according to sustainable development principles.

As set forth in further detail herein, MassDOT has submitted a DEIR/S that comprehensively evaluates the relative benefits and impacts of this large-scale transportation infrastructure project. Amongst the project's benefits are improved access to transit and the corresponding traffic, safety, air quality, and greenhouse gas reduction benefits associated with increased use of public transit. The project also has significant potential to facilitate sustainable land use and development patterns and will service environmental justice communities. The proposed route does however involve substantial environmental impacts associated with alteration of wetlands and elimination or fragmentation of habitat (including rare species habitat and loss of biodiversity) as well as induced secondary growth and noise-related impacts, that will need to be evaluated closely in order to minimize impacts and to mitigate unavoidable impacts.

The purpose of the DEIR for any project is to provide sufficient information to allow the selection of a preferred alternative that will avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impacts to the maximum extent feasible as required under MEPA. I have received numerous comments from public officials, state agencies, environmental advocates, local residents, and other members of the public concerning the selection of a preferred alternative that avoids impacts to the greatest degree. I thank the many parties who have provided comments on the DEIR/S and the many agencies that have participated in its development. In the case of this project, selecting a preferred alternative is a challenging task given the many trade-offs that must be made among legitimate environmental concerns and the balancing that must accompany evaluation of sometimes competing environmental goals and impacts. What must be accomplished through the MEPA process is a thorough vetting of the relative impacts and benefits of alternatives that will allow, MassDOT as the project proponent, and the state permitting agencies to make an informed decision about which alternative strikes the most appropriate balance in view of MEPA's statutory directives.

Based on the record before me, and as set forth in greater detail in the following sections of this Certificate, I am satisfied that MassDOT has made the case for the Stoughton route to be brought forward as the preferred alternative in the FEIR. However, there is significant additional work that must be completed in the FEIR to allow the project to complete review under MEPA. The Scope set forth below outlines the outstanding issues that must be addressed, including the development of specific and detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts.

MassDOT did not identify a preferred mode among the diesel and electric alternatives. However, because the electric option is preferable from an air quality perspective, the Stoughton Electric should be the focus of the FEIR.

### Background

MassDOT has defined the project purpose as to "more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies



in the affected communities". The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) uses a more narrow definition of project purpose, which does not include the smart growth aspect. The Corps overall project purpose is defined in the DEIR/S as "to more fully meet the existing and future need for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston Massachusetts, and to enhance regional mobility". I believe the Corridor Plan component of the project has tremendous potential to influence development patterns in the South Coast region in a way that supports smart growth and environmental protection. This is a critical factor to consider in the context of MEPA review.

The proposed sixty-mile transit route follows existing freight lines from New Bedford/Fall River to Taunton, and involves construction of new tracks in the Pine Swamp in the Town of Raynham and the Hockomock Swamp in the Towns of Easton and Raynham. New track construction is proposed along an inactive Right-of-Way in the Pine Swamp and Hockomock Swamp that has been discontinued from rail use since 1958. The project has the potential to increase transit accessibility and ridership, improve regional air quality, and support opportunities for smart growth and sustainable development in the South Coast region, which includes thirty-one cities and towns. At the same time, the project has the potential to result in considerable impacts to natural resources and wildlife habitat of significant ecological value. Selection of a preferred alternative that balances the relative environmental benefits and negative impacts of this large-scale regional initiative is therefore a fundamental objective of this environmental review process.

In selecting among alternatives for this project, MassDOT has considered air quality, climate change, transit access, and public safety as well as wetland, rare species and biodiversity impacts in a DEIR to find a balanced preferred alternative. This balancing act is difficult given the myriad of sometimes competing concerns and will continue in the FEIR and the permitting process. The availability of convenient and reliable public transportation options is a crucial component of the Commonwealth's strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling the problem of global climate change. In addition, expanding transit options for commuters can help reduce congestion on roadways and thereby improve public safety, and provide other socio-economic benefits to Environmental Justice communities. However, the potential for significant environmental degradation and loss of habitat, as well as the national and regional significance of some areas that are at the heart of this environmental study, make it equally important that we give serious consideration to these issues during the environmental review and permitting process. The prospect of climate change further highlights the need for other adaptation strategies, which include protection of our most vulnerable and sensitive ecosystems.

An informed and objective alternatives analysis is at the heart of the MEPA process. Only in this way can a state agency meet its statutory obligations to take all feasible measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate damage to the environment. Numerous routing and mode options were evaluated in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the project and then narrowed down to eight alternatives to be further evaluated in the DEIR. The alternatives evaluated in the DEIR/S include electric and diesel options for three rail routes; Attleboro, Stoughton, and Whittenton (a variant of the Stoughton route), as well as a Rapid Bus route, and a No-Build/Enhanced Bus scenario.



The DEIR/S presents a thorough and detailed comparison of the relative environmental impacts and benefits of the various alternatives, and identifies the Stoughton route as the preferred alternative. After thoroughly reviewing the DEIR/S and the comments received, I am satisfied that MassDOT has provided sufficient information for the purposes of MEPA review to demonstrate that the Attleboro alternative is not operationally feasible, and that both the Whittenton and Rapid Bus alternatives are less effective compared to the Stoughton alternative in meeting the project purpose. The analysis also demonstrates that the Rapid Bus alternative is not practicable because the Zipper lane on I-93 would fail by 2030 to provide a travel time benefit over auto use. Future traffic congestion would result in longer travel times from the South Coast Region to Boston resulting in lower bus ridership, increased vehicle miles traveled, and negative effects on air quality. Compared to the Stoughton route, the Whittenton alternative draws less ridership from the focus areas of Fall River and New Bedford. In addition, the Whittenton variation would result in disproportionate noise impacts to Environmental Justice communities in Taunton as well as public safety concerns due to the number of at-grade crossings required.

Therefore, on balance, I am satisfied that MassDOT has made the case for the Stoughton route to be brought forward as the preferred alternative in the FEIR, and I concur with many commenters who have indicated that from an air quality perspective, the electric option is preferable to diesel. The diesel alternative should be eliminated from further review and MassDOT should focus on the Stoughton Electric as the preferred feasible alternative for further analysis in the FEIR. However, I note that the Corps has not yet made its determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for the project. If the Corps selects a LEDPA other than the Stoughton Electric alternative, MassDOT should submit a Notice of Project Change (NPC) so that a revised Scope can be issued as appropriate for preparation of the FEIR and the continued coordination of state and federal environmental review.

### Project Description

As noted above, the purpose of the project as proposed by MassDOT is to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in affected communities.

The proposed Stoughton Electric rail will provide commuter service to South Station using the Northeast Corridor, Stoughton Line, New Bedford Main Line, and Fall River Secondary Line. The New Bedford to Boston route is 54.9 miles long and the Fall River to Boston route is 52.4 miles long. The project requires upgrades to track infrastructure along the existing Stoughton line including reconstruction of tracks from Canton Junction to Stoughton, construction of new tracks from Stoughton to Winter Street in Taunton, for a distance of 15 miles, on an abandoned right-of-way which crosses through the Hockomock Swamp and the Pine Swamp. Reconstruction of tracks is also proposed from Winter Street in Taunton to Weir Junction, a distance of 1.7 miles. The project requires reconstruction of tracks in the Southern Triangle, which includes the New Bedford Main Line and the Fall River Secondary. Infrastructure improvements associated with the project include constructing, reconstructing, or widening 45 bridges, and constructing or reconstructing 46 railroad at-grade crossings.



The project includes ten new rail stations: North Easton, Easton Village, Raynham Place, Taunton, Taunton Depot, King's Highway, Whale's Tooth, Freetown, Fall River Depot, and Battleship Cove. Major reconstruction is also proposed at two existing commuter rail stations, Canton Center and Stoughton. The project will require two overnight layover facilities, one on the New Bedford Main Line and one on the Fall River Secondary. Five alternative layover sites are described in the DEIR/S. MassDOT is also proposing an expansion of South Station as well as mid-day layover facilities in Boston to address existing and future Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) and Amtrak capacity needs that are independent of the South Coast Rail project. The facility expansion in Boston will support the project's infrastructure requirements but it is part of the baseline/No-Build scenario, is not analyzed as part of the DEIR/S, and will undergo environmental review at a future date. The traction power system for the Stoughton Electric rail will include a substation in Easton and one in New Bedford, two switching stations (one in Canton and another in Berkeley), and six paralleling stations (Easton, Taunton, New Bedford, Fall River, and two in Freetown).

Construction and operation of the Stoughton Electric will result in alteration of approximately 250 acres of land, direct permanent impacts to approximately 12 acres of wetlands (Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW)), alteration of approximately 32 acres of mapped habitat for state-listed species, habitat fragmentation and migratory barrier impacts, and other secondary and cumulative impacts to wildlife, biodiversity, and open space. The proposed project will result in significant impacts to natural resources and wildlife habitat that must be adequately mitigated in order to satisfy MEPA requirements and other regulatory requirements for state permitting. The habitat areas impacted by the project include the Hockomock Swamp ACEC, which is one of the largest unfragmented wetland systems in the state, and the Pine Swamp conservation area in Raynham. Development of a robust and detailed mitigation plan for unavoidable impacts is a core requirement of the FEIR.

The project has the potential to improve regional air quality and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by increasing the number of people using public transit, thereby reducing automobile use and GHG and pollutant emissions associated with vehicle miles travelled (VMT). The smart growth aspect of the project, as described in the DEIR/S and the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan has the potential to substantially reduce the amount of land consumption and related impacts that might otherwise occur if existing development patterns continue. By concentrating development in Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and protecting habitat of high ecological value in Priority Protection Areas (PPAs), MassDOT's smart growth plans could reduce by up to 50 percent the amount of habitat degradation projected to occur in the region by 2030. Another core requirement of the FEIR Scope relates to further refinement and specificity of MassDOT's commitments to the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan through land acquisition and other smart growth measures as part of a comprehensive mitigation plan for the project's direct and indirect impacts to the Commonwealth's natural resources and wildlife habitat.

#### Interagency and Community Involvement

The South Coast Rail project was previously reviewed under MEPA from 1995 to 2002. However, federal environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)



was not undertaken at that time. As a result, the project is now undergoing a joint environmental review process, which includes a comprehensive alternatives analysis under both the state and federal review procedures. The alternatives analysis provides information on the project's environmental impacts that will inform both the federal and state permitting processes. I fully support the ongoing state-federal coordination process to facilitate agency and public review under MEPA and NEPA, and commend MassDOT for undertaking such a robust and coordinated public review process.

MassDOT has also conducted an extensive stakeholder involvement process that includes an Interagency Coordinating Group, the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force, and a broad civic engagement process. I would like to thank the Commuter Rail Task Force, the Interagency Coordinating Group, as well as members of the public for their input to date and I appreciate the ongoing participation of all stakeholders during the environmental review of this project. I hope and expect that MassDOT will continue its commitment to stakeholder outreach and public input as it prepares the FEIR for this project.

#### Permitting and MEPA Jurisdiction

The MEPA process provides a valuable forum for the collection and review of environmental documents and comments on a project thereby reflecting various points of view. However, reconciling all of the identified (and sometimes competing) concerns and identifying a preferred alternative that achieves consensus support among all interested parties, is beyond the scope of MEPA. MEPA review, which is conducted in response to the filing of environmental review documents by the Proponent, is intended to facilitate environmental planning for Projects requiring Agency Action. MEPA review is not a permitting process. MEPA requires public study, disclosure, and development of feasible mitigation for a proposed project. It does not pass judgment on whether a project is environmentally beneficial, or whether a project can or should receive a particular permit. Those decisions are left to the permitting agencies. MEPA review occurs before permitting agencies act, to ensure that the permitting agencies know the environmental consequences of a project. No state agency can issue permits needed for the project until MEPA review is complete.

The proposed project is subject to MEPA review because it is being undertaken by a state agency and because it meets or exceeds the review thresholds set forth in the MEPA regulations, including thresholds for a mandatory EIR. The project is undergoing environmental review pursuant to the following sections of the MEPA regulations: Section 11.03(a)(1)(5) because it involves construction of a new rail or rapid transit line along a new, unused or abandoned right-of-way; Section 11.03(3)(a)(1)(a) because it will result in alteration of more than one acre of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW); Section 11.02(a)(2) because it involves alteration requiring a variance in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act; Section 11.03(1)(a)(1) and (2) because it will result in alteration of 50 or more acres of land and creation of 10 or more acres of new impervious area; Section 11.03(11)(b) because it is located within a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); Section 11.03(b)(3) because it involves conversion of land held for natural resource purposes in accordance with Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth; Section 11.03(2)(b)(2) because it would result in more than two acres of disturbance of designated priority habitat that results in a take of



a state-listed species; and Section 11.03(10)(b)(1) and (2) because it may result in demolition of a part of a state-listed historic structure or destruction of a state-listed archaeological site. The project may also meet or exceed other MEPA review thresholds depending upon its final design.

The project requires a 401 Water Quality Certification, a Chapter 91 License, and a Variance from the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The project also requires local Orders of Conditions under the WPA (and, on appeal only, Superseding Order(s) from MassDEP). Other permits or approvals required for the project include a Conservation and Management Permit from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), a land disposition agreement with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as well as approval from the legislature and the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) for a disposition of land protected by Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The project is subject to the MEPA Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy and Protocol. The project is subject to review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Office of Coastal Zone Management. At the Federal level, the project requires a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an Air Quality Conformance Determination, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Permit, and is subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Because the proposed project is being undertaken by a state agency MEPA jurisdiction is broad and extends to all aspects of the project that are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause Damage to the Environment as defined in the MEPA regulations.

## REVIEW OF THE DEIR/S

### Alternatives

The DEIR/S evaluates the relative ability of alternatives to meet the project purpose in a cost-effective manner. Criteria considered in the evaluation include quality of service, constructability, schedule, costs, and smart growth opportunities. The Certificate on the ENF required MassDOT to evaluate alternatives that include electric and diesel options for three rail routes: Attleboro, Stoughton, and Whittenton (a variant of the Stoughton route), a Rapid Bus route, and a No-Build/Enhanced Bus scenario.

### *Attleboro*

The Attleboro alternative is not feasible and the rationale for eliminating this as an alternative moving forward has been described in detail in the DEIR/S. MassDOT conducted a thorough analysis of the operational feasibility for the Attleboro Route under several scenarios including the elimination of all constraints at South Station and construction of a fourth track from Readville to South Station. The fourth track is excessively costly and disruptive, would require re-routing of the MBTA Orange Line, and would result in substantial impacts to the Southwest Corridor Park in Jamaica Plain and environmental justice communities in this area. The



Attleboro alternative cannot be modeled without a fourth track as it fails in peak hour periods causing disruption and delays to other commuter rail lines.

### *Stoughton*

The Stoughton route is MassDOT's preferred alternative. It meets the project purpose in terms of travel time (76 minutes) and the time for construction (4.5 years), and performs better than other alternatives in terms of ridership and reductions in Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT). The DEIR/S indicates a more effective cost-per-rider for the Stoughton route compared with other alternatives. However, mitigation costs have yet to be fully evaluated.

### *Whittenton*

The Whittenton Alternative is a variation of the Stoughton route that includes a diversion to avoid the Pine Swamp. Although the Whittenton Electric gets slightly higher ridership overall, the Stoughton Route captures more riders from the New Bedford and Fall River areas, which are the focus of this new public transit service, and shows a greater increase in shift of commuters from auto to transit. This is because of its faster travel time to Boston. Although the Whittenton Electric performs well in terms of ridership projections, its longer route to avoid Pine Swamp adds approximately 11 minutes to the journey from the South Coast to Boston. Compared to the Stoughton Alternative, the Whittenton Alternative is projected to pick up more riders from Taunton but less from New Bedford and Fall River. The cost per rider and smart growth opportunities are similar to the Stoughton alternative, as is the construction timetable.

### *Rapid Bus*

The cost of the Rapid Bus alternative is substantially lower than the rail alternatives (\$0.8 billion compared to \$1.8 billion for the Stoughton Electric) and it performs well in terms of construction timeline and less significant impacts to natural resources and biodiversity when compared with the rail alternatives. However, the Rapid Bus does not perform as well as the rail alternatives in terms of travel time, with the exception of Whittenton Diesel, which has a similar travel time. Since the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) review, the travel time projections for the Rapid Bus were updated to account for projected increases in traffic congestion in 2030. In comparison with the Stoughton Electric, which takes 76 minutes from New Bedford to South Station, the Rapid Bus travel time is 27 minutes longer (103 minutes). The longer travel time from the south coast communities to Boston has a significant influence on ridership. The ridership model indicates that Rapid Bus would generate 1,700 new linked boardings, representing the number of commuters shifting from automobiles to transit, compared with 5,900 for the Stoughton Electric. Because the ridership is lower for Rapid Bus, VMT and related air pollutants are not reduced to the same extent as they are under the Stoughton Alternative. In addition, the analysis in the DEIR/S indicates that the existing zipper lane along I-93 will no longer provide a travel advantage for the Rapid Bus under 2030 conditions. Buses are expected to travel slower in more congested conditions thereby adding to existing air quality problems. Alternative operating plans were considered to evaluate how performance might be improved under different policy assumptions (for example, a three-person minimum versus a two-person occupancy restriction in zipper lanes). In a Memo dated June 24, 2011, MassDOT indicates that



extension of the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane was also evaluated as part of the Central Artery Tunnel project. An HOV extension could potentially improve Rapid Bus performance by providing a continuous zipper lane to South Station, thereby addressing delays encountered in the two-mile section of I-93 where the Rapid Bus travels in mixed traffic. However, the evaluation showed that constraints at Savin Hill would require substantial infrastructure improvements, disruption to existing rail lines, and residential takings on the Savin Hill embankment. Based on MassDOT's analysis, it is not feasible to substantially improve performance of the Rapid Bus for the 2030 Build condition.

#### *No Build-Enhanced Bus*

The No Build Alternative represents a continued investment in the regional transportation network, but does not address the fundamental need for improved public transit service between New Bedford/Fall River and Boston. Under this alternative, no new rail or bus service would be provided to Southeastern Massachusetts. Enhancements are proposed for existing bus services and this alternative includes the expansion of South Station, the construction of mid-day layover facilities in the Boston area and the reconstruction of railroad bridges in the New Bedford area. Ridership projections are significantly lower for this alternative compared to the rail or Rapid Bus alternatives. The No-Build/Enhanced Bus alternative is expected to achieve only 400 new linked trips daily. Although it does not generate the environmental impacts associated with other alternatives, this no-build does not serve the project purpose. It is however useful as a baseline for comparison of alternatives under 2030 conditions.

#### *Comparison of Impacts*

The DEIR/S includes a comprehensive comparative analysis of the environmental impacts of project alternatives, including impacts to air quality, wetlands, upland habitat, rare species, Article 97 protected land, and biodiversity.

*Air quality:* The rail alternatives provide more air quality benefits compared to the Rapid Bus because they attract more riders and thereby result in a greater reduction in VMT per day. From a regional perspective however, the differences among the alternatives is minimal in terms of their air quality benefits. The Stoughton Electric route achieves an approximately 295,922 reduction in VMT per day compared to 228,018 for Whittenton Electric and 81,495 for the Rapid Bus (diesel option, a hybrid bus alternative was not evaluated). The diesel alternatives for rail show substantially higher VMT reductions when compared with the diesel Rapid Bus (228,705 VMT reduction for Stoughton and 173,961 VMT per day for Whittenton diesel).

*Wetlands:* Both Attleboro rail and the Rapid Bus result in the largest amount of acres of direct wetlands impact (approximately 21 acres compared to 11.94 acres and 10.34 acres respectively for Stoughton and Whittenton). However, the quality of wetland resource is an important consideration in assessing impacts. For example, the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives have more significant impacts to the functions and value of higher quality interior wetlands compared with the primarily edge impacts of the Rapid Bus route. In addition, both the Stoughton and Whittenton routes impact a greater acreage of vernal pool supporting habitat. Vernal Pools are a major contributor to biodiversity.



*Upland Habitat:* the DEIR/S estimates that direct loss of upland habitat associated with Stoughton Electric is 183.27 acres, which includes 55.4 acres of supporting habitat for vernal pools. The estimate for the Whittenton alternative is slightly higher at 187.98 due to the longer alignment. The diesel rail alternatives impact approximately 3.5 acres less because they do not require additional land alteration for the electrical traction stations. The Rapid Bus alternative has the largest impact to upland habitat, estimated at 316.98 acres although impacts to biodiversity, rare species and wetland habitat may be less significant than those of rail because the acreage affected by the bus route is primarily along the edge of existing roadways in already degraded areas. In comparison, the Stoughton and Whittenton rail alternatives impact a greater area of unfragmented habitat with a high ecological value.

*Rare Species:* The Stoughton Electric alternative impacts approximately twice as many acres of mapped habitat compared to the Rapid bus alternative (32.6 acres compared to 16.2 acres). The Whittenton alternative impacts approximately 31.8 acres of mapped habitat. The diesel rail alternatives impact slightly less mapped habitat than the electric alternatives because the latter need additional land for electrical traction stations. As NHESP notes in its comment letter, the differences between Stoughton and Whittenton from a rare species perspective are not significant enough to influence the choice among these alternatives. The Whittenton route would have greater impacts to Box Turtle habitat but would avoid Pine Swamp, which contains habitat for a state-listed butterfly. Otherwise, both alternatives share the same route through the Hockomock Swamp and would result in similar barrier and fragmentation impacts. The Rapid Bus route would have the least impact to rare species and their habitats.

In the relative comparison of alternatives, the DEIR/S tables and text provide inaccurate information on Whittenton alternative rare species impacts. The discrepancy was identified during DEIR/S review, and MassDOT provided corrections in an email to NHESP dated May 19, 2011. Impacts to state-listed species habitat associated with the Whittenton alternative are 31.8 acres for the Whittenton electric alternative (not 13.2 acres as indicated in the DEIR/S) and 29.9 acres for the Whittenton Diesel. As noted above, the outcome of the review indicates that there is little difference among the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives with regard to rare species impacts. They both result in fragmentation and interior habitat loss.

*Article 97 land:* The Stoughton route impacts approximately two acres of Article 97-protected land compared to the Whittenton Alternative that impacts less than one acre and the Rapid Bus, which impacts 4.5 acres.

*Biodiversity:* the DEIR/S includes a detailed analysis of biodiversity impacts using the Conservation assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis developed by University of Massachusetts (UMass) Amherst. The analysis, as described in more detail below, is useful in developing a better understanding of the relative impacts of alternatives on biodiversity at a landscape level of analysis. Some of the more detailed micro-scale level of impacts cannot be analyzed at the CAPS level of resolution. Based on the analysis, the rail alternatives have substantially more impacts to biodiversity than the Rapid Bus, and the Stoughton and Whittenton alignments are similar in their level of impact. As noted in MasssDEP's comment letter, additional analysis was done by UMass at MassDEP's request and this analysis highlighted a



greater impact from the Stoughton direct route (compared to Whittenton) in terms of its loss of habitat areas that have a high Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI).

*Noise and Vibration:* The Stoughton Electric alternative will impact approximately 2,136 sensitive receptors (1,728 moderate and 408 severe impacts) compared with 2,243 sensitive receptor impacts for the Whittenton Electric (1,826 moderate and 347 severe). The diesel impacts are less (1,793 total receptors impacted for Stoughton compared with 1,987 for Whittenton). In Taunton, the Whittenton route would result in disproportionate impacts to residents in Environmental Justice communities. The DEIR/S concludes that, for the Whittenton route, almost three times as many residents in Environmental Justice neighborhoods in Taunton will be disproportionately impacted by noise in comparison to the percentage of the population affected in non-Environmental Justice neighborhoods. Within the City of Taunton, the Stoughton Electric and Diesel alternatives would generate 12 and 5 severe noise impacts respectively, compared to 33 and 40 severe impacts from Whittenton's operations. In addition, the Whittenton Alternative will cause 708 severe horn noise impacts in Taunton compared with 28 severe horn impacts from the Stoughton Alternative. Noise impacts would also be experienced by residents in New Bedford and Fall River who would be similarly affected regardless of route since the Stoughton and Whittenton alignments are the same in the Southern Triangle. Electric train operations associated with the Fall River Secondary would result in 581 moderate and 155 severe impacts to residential receptors. The New Bedford Main Line segment would result in 298 moderate and 63 severe impacts to residential receptors. The DEIR/S does not identify any sensitive receptors for noise associated with the Rapid Bus because it will operate in areas already impacted by traffic-related noise and will not result in a measurable difference to receptors.

*Indirect and Cumulative Impacts:* An analysis of secondary growth impacts associated with the alternatives, including induced growth and socio-economic impacts, is included in the DEIR/S and discussed below in the section on Indirect and Cumulative Impacts.

*Method and criteria for comparative analysis:* The DEIR/S does a good job in explaining the method and criteria used for the comparative analysis of alternatives, and providing sufficient data for the reviewer to understand the overall impacts and trade-offs among alternatives. However, as noted in several comment letters received, the A-F grading approach used may not be the best way to present a fair and unbiased comparison of alternatives. I recommend that MassDOT not use this approach in any summary tables presented in the FEIR/S. Rather, actual quantification of impacts should be presented in comparison with the no-build and other alternatives (versus comparison with the worst-or best performing alternative which can result in an "A" for a route that results in permanent direct impacts to 12 acres of high quality wetlands).

*No-Build/Enhanced Bus Alternative:* The DEIR/S describes a No Build-Enhanced Bus alternative that includes foreseeable transportation projects and other developments assumed to be in place by the project build year. The no-build rail assumes an expansion with seven additional tracks at South Station (for a total of 20 tracks). The enhanced bus component builds on existing bus routes and park and ride lots but does not include any new service (the new service is evaluated as the Rapid Bus alternative). Enhancements included for the no-build alternative include bus schedule enhancements, new and expanded park-and-ride facilities,



transportation demand management, and transportation policy enhancements for commuter bus and other programmed and funded improvements for the system. The ridership analysis indicates that the No-build/Enhanced Bus alternative will achieve an increase in ridership equivalent to a diversion of 400 riders from car to public transit. VMT reductions projected for this alternative are estimated in the DEIR/S to be 75,100.

#### *Layover Facilities*

The DEIR/S includes information on five potential layover sites for the rail alternatives. Two layover sites will be required for the proposed rail service; one on the New Bedford line and another for the Fall River line. The sites identified in the DEIR/S include the Weaver's Cove East and Weaver's Cove West sites in Fall River, the ISP site in Freetown, the Wamsutta site in New Bedford near the proposed Whale's Tooth station, and the Church Street site in New Bedford. The FEIR should include additional information and analysis of the layover facilities as outlined in the Scope below.

#### *Conclusion – Alternatives Analysis*

The DEIR/S concludes that the Stoughton route is the best alternative in terms of practicability and meeting the overall project purpose of expanding transit service to the South Coast region. I concur with MassDOT that based on the analysis presented, the Attleboro and Rapid Bus alternatives are not feasible, and the Whittenton Route does not serve the project purpose as well as the Stoughton direct route. In addition, the Whittenton Alternative would result in substantially more noise impacts, both moderate and severe, to a large number of residents in the Taunton area, including those in Environmental Justice communities. The Whittenton alternative also raises public safety concerns due to the necessity for 12 at-grade crossings in an approximately one-mile section of the route through Taunton. Although the Whittenton route has approximately one acre more in wetlands impacts compared to Stoughton, as indicated in MassDEP's comment letter, it is reasonably likely that through further minimization, mitigation and compensatory measures, which should be detailed in the FEIR, the divergence between these two alternatives can be narrowed to the point where their net differences in environmental impacts will be negligible. Both the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives impact rare species and their habitats to a similar degree. Having considered these factors relating to noise and public safety, environmental justice and project purpose, I agree that the Stoughton Route is preferable to the Whittenton route and should be carried forward for further analysis in the FEIR.

The DEIR/S includes a comparative analysis of electric and diesel options for all rail alignments. Although the electric alternatives result in some additional land alteration compared with diesel, I believe, on balance, that the air quality benefits of electric warrant selection of electric as the preferred power source. Therefore, the Scope below focuses on the Stoughton Electric as the preferred alternative to be carried forward to the FEIR.



### Freight Services

Several commenters expressed concern about potential freight through the Hockomock Swamp. In a Memo dated June 23, 2011, MassDOT clarified that the South Coast Rail project has not been designed to accommodate freight traffic north of Taunton through the Hockomock Swamp where freight currently does not exist. MassDOT also notes that if freight is proposed in the future, further environmental review would be required.

### Land Alteration

As discussed in the alternatives section above, the DEIR/S provided a detailed comparative analysis of alternatives that includes estimates of project-related impacts to wetlands, endangered species, biodiversity, environmental justice communities and socio-economic indicators.

The DEIR/S estimates the total habitat loss for the preferred Stoughton alternative at approximately 251 acres compared to approximately 360 acres for the Rapid Bus, 254 acres for the Whittenton Electric Alternative, and 266 acres for Attleboro Electric. The cumulative estimates provided appear to be for the rail and bus route alignments only and it is not clear if the estimates include land alteration associated with the stations and layover facilities, which should be clarified in the FEIR. For the preferred alternative, the Stoughton route, the estimate for habitat loss includes 182.27 acres of upland habitat, 55.05 acres of supporting upland for vernal pools, 11.86 acres of direct wetlands impact (BVW) and 1.77 of vernal pool wetland impact. Additional wetlands impacts (e.g. for Riverfront and Bordering Land Subject to Flooding) should be detailed in the FEIR.

The DEIR/S describes five potential layover facilities in New Bedford and Fall River. The total amount of land alteration associated with project layover facilities is not defined in the DEIR/S. However, the DEIR/S summary of property acquisition indicates that an area of 11 acres to 44 acres would be required per site. Property acquisition estimates for the various alternatives range from 75.36 acres for the Whittenton diesel to 106.80 acres for the Stoughton Electric. The analysis of layover facility impacts should be expanded in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.

### Ridership Projections

The DEIR/S includes a detailed analysis of ridership and traffic estimates associated with each alternative, which were developed and calibrated by the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) using its Regional Travel Demand Model (RTDM). The inputs for the RTDM included land use assumptions, transportation service assumptions, and modeling methods. The DEIR/S discusses the sources of information for the analysis, which included input from state, federal, and regional agencies, and local communities. The modeling process used by CTPS is consistent with other major transportation projects in eastern Massachusetts, which allows for a consistent comparison across alternatives based on their project ridership and specific elements such as service plans and demographics. The model incorporates connections to commuter rail



lines, the central subway system, and bus routes in regional communities, which supports the analysis of system-wide boardings and regional mobility.

To estimate future ridership projections, the CTPS refined their RTDM set to include regional transportation projects and land use alternatives based on regional plans for the study area and the proposed operational plans for the project alternatives. The DEIR/S includes information on the ridership modeling methodology, model inputs, transit operating plans, and a detailed discussion of the ridership projection results. Ridership forecasts were developed for all alternatives for the 2030 forecast year. The output of the model runs for the various rail and Rapid Bus alternatives were compared to the No-Build (which includes assumptions to enhance existing bus service) to see what travel pattern changes would occur based on implementation of alternative transit system improvements.

The ridership analysis compares alternatives based on several different metrics including new linked trip estimates, which represents the number of people who, without the project, would otherwise have driven to work. In addition to the estimates for mode shifts (from auto to transit), the results provide estimates for the overall increase in transit use and the total reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) projected for each alternative. The reduction in VMT correlates to air quality benefits associated with the project. New system-wide boarding estimates represent the overall draw of passengers to the commuter rail transit system due to the proposed project.

The No-Build/enhanced bus alternative is expected to generate an increase in linked transit trips of 400 daily linked trips, compared to 5,900 for Stoughton Electric, 5,000 for Stoughton Diesel, 5,500 for Whittenton Electric, 4,600 for Whittenton Diesel, and 1,700 for Rapid Bus (diesel). The Stoughton Electric alternative has the greatest benefit in terms of shifts from automobile to public transit and reductions in VMT and vehicle emissions. Total daily ridership for the alternatives are estimated to be: Stoughton Electric - 9,580; Attleboro Electric - 9,360; Whittenton Electric - 9,640; and Rapid Bus - 4,200. Electric locomotives can operate at higher speeds than diesel engines and therefore attract more ridership resulting in greater VMT reductions for the electric alternatives compared with Rapid Bus or diesel rail alternatives.

#### Secondary Growth and Cumulative Impacts

The DEIR/S includes a comprehensive analysis of indirect impacts associated with the project, including induced growth expected as a result of the proposed transit project. The assessment of induced growth quantifies household and employment changes in the south coast communities. Other aspects of the indirect impact assessment consider changes in land use patterns associated with a "business as usual" scenario for the growth expected in the region by 2030 and an alternative scenario based on MassDOT's smart growth plan as described in the South Coast Rail Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan. The indirect analysis also evaluates encroachment-alteration indirect effects such as the long-term decline in the viability of a population of a particular species as a result of habitat fragmentation caused by the project. The DEIR/S includes a cumulative impact analysis that evaluates changes in the study area as a result of the combined effects of the project, past development, and reasonable foreseeable future actions.



The DEIR/S includes information on the methodology and assumptions used in the indirect and cumulative analysis. The analysis includes potential impacts of the proposed transit project to land use, infrastructure requirements, and the social and economic environment. Induced growth in the vicinity of proposed stations and nearby communities was estimated using information from literature review and regional growth projections, including data obtained from regional planning agencies and the Transportation Economic Development Impact System (TREDIS) model.

The analysis of the smart growth scenario assumes that 1) infrastructure constraints will be overcome within reason and that the Commonwealth will support investments in infrastructure to realize more compact investment; 2) local rezoning can be expected to occur for Priority Development Areas (PDAs) to accommodate higher levels of development and different permitted uses; and 3) a greater mix of multi-family and smaller-lot single-family units will be developed under the smart growth scenario. The analysis also assumes that proposed stations are designed to optimize Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities with the full range of smart growth measures as provided in the Corridor Plan and regional long-term plans.

In developing the 2030 smart growth scenario, all of the Priority Development Areas (PDAs) were designated to receive a portion of housing and job growth and 50 percent of projected growth (baseline and induced) was assumed to shift from Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) to PDAs, with 25 percent shifting from "neutral" areas to PDAs. The DEIR/S includes the results of analysis, which indicates that under the No-Build scenario, population in the study area is expected to grow by 74,371 households. The alternatives are expected to induce additional growth estimated to be 2,057 households (Attleboro), 1,972 (Stoughton) and 1,310 (Rapid Bus). Under the No-Build scenario, job growth in the study area is expected to add 81,615 jobs by 2030. The induced job growth associated with the project is estimated to be 2,600 (Attleboro), 2,535 (Stoughton), and 1,678 (Rapid Bus). The DEIR/S details how growth in households and jobs would be allocated, with some communities gaining and others losing jobs and households.

The DEIR/S further develops the analysis by evaluating impacts of induced growth on land use, farmland, wetlands, biodiversity, water and sewer infrastructure, and air quality. Metrics used were based on published sources (e.g. loss of 0.3 acres of forest land per household under the No-Build scenario). Information from the MassAudubon report "Losing Ground" was used to estimate the direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity as a result of new development in the south coast region. The analysis in the DEIR/S assumes a thirty percent reduction in land consumption based on a high-level implementation of Smart Growth measures (and 21 percent reduction for the "low" scenario). Both high and low metrics were used to reflect different level of implementation of the smart growth plan (e.g. 0.21 acres of forest land loss under the "high smart growth" scenario and 0.24 acres of loss under the low scenario). Community-specific metrics were also developed.

The induced growth in jobs and households estimated for the project alternatives amounts to a 2.8 percent increase above the No-Build scenario for the Attleboro alternative, a 2.7 percent increase for Stoughton, and a 1.8 percent increase for the Rapid Bus. The Whittenton alternative was not evaluated separately as it is expected to have a similar level of induced growth as the



Stoughton alternative. The DEIR/S includes estimates of projected residential unit and commercial development associated with proposed station area Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The Stoughton alternative (the preferred route) would include TOD at ten station sites. Overall, the redistribution of growth expected as a result of the smart growth plan would result in a greater amount of new growth in New Bedford, Fall River, Foxborough, and Taunton. Future growth would be shifted out of rural communities such as Acushnet, Berkeley, Lakeville, Rehoboth, Wareham and Westport as well as more developed communities such as Mansfield.

The DEIR/S evaluates the cumulative effects to the economy of each of the project alternatives combined with historic economic trends and recent or reasonably foreseeable future actions. All the alternatives are expected to measurably benefit the economy based on the projections for 2030 (\$487 million-Attleboro, \$479 million-Stoughton, and \$296 million-Rapid Bus). The analysis indicates that the incremental addition of project-related benefits to the regional economy are not substantial; the cumulative effects of any of the alternatives would be a minimal change to any of the economic parameters. The Rapid Bus alternative is expected to have less of an economic benefit due to less ridership, TOD, and induced growth when compared with the rail alternatives. Local economic impacts would vary depending on where the stations and PDAs are; the smart growth approach would concentrate impacts in PDAs. The analysis concludes that induced growth would result in economic benefits in the South Coast region, and that there are no substantive differences between the alternatives in their cumulative impacts to the economy on a regional basis. From a regional perspective, cumulative economic effects are expected to be minimally different from the No-Build scenario.

The amount of land expected to be lost as a result of growth under the No-Build scenario (i.e. no new transit) is estimated in the DEIR/S at 44,995 acres. When induced growth associated with the project is added, the loss is expected to be 46,165 acres (Attleboro), 46,121 acres (Stoughton), and 45,756 (Rapid Bus). The DEIR/S indicates that for every one acre of development, three acres of biodiversity are impacted. The No-Build alternative is expected to result in a loss of biodiversity value in 134,984 acres of land. The Stoughton Alternative is expected to result in an additional indirect loss of 1,126 acres of land compared to the No-Build, which corresponds to an additional loss of biodiversity value in 3,378 acres of land (for a total loss of value in 138,362 acres due to baseline and project-related induced growth). The combined loss of land associated with the Stoughton route is 1,233 acres (106.8 from direct conversion and 1,126 from induced growth). The DEIR/S quantifies cumulative impacts to biodiversity based on historic trends, the project alternatives, and other recent and foreseeable development. The analysis indicates that implementation the smart growth strategy would be beneficial environmentally and would reduce habitat degradation by approximately 50 percent.

The DEIR/S presents additional detail on the projected losses in forested land and wetlands under the No-Build and other project alternatives, and quantifies reductions in impacts expected under a smart growth approach to development. Cumulative impacts to rare species, water quality and wetlands are evaluated. The induced growth-related loss of wetlands is estimated at 13 acres for the Stoughton alternative, which could be reduced to a 9.3-10-acre loss under a smart growth development scenario. The total direct and indirect impacts to wetlands are estimated to be approximately 25.35 acres for the Stoughton alternative (this estimate is for



Bordering Vegetated Wetlands and Outstanding Resource Waters associated with vernal pools. Additional detail on other resource impacts will be included in the FEIR).

The analysis of indirect impacts also considers additional water demand associated with induced growth of households, estimated at 285,025 gallons per day (gpd) more than the No-Build for the Stoughton Alternative (184,438 gpd for the Rapid Bus and 294,287 gpd for Attleboro Alternative). Additional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with induced household growth was analyzed using the eQUEST model and estimated to result in an increase in GHG emissions of 20,750 tons per year (tpy) of CO<sub>2</sub> for the Stoughton Alternative, 21,424 tpy for Attleboro Alternative, and 12,427 tpy for the Rapid Bus Alternative. The amount of vehicle miles travelled (VMT) is expected to increase as a result of induced growth. The DEIR/S projects an increase of approximately 75,422 VMT for the Stoughton alternative and estimates that implementation of aggressive smart growth measures could result in a decrease of 490,451 compared to the No-Build “business-as-usual” alternative.

The analysis in the DEIR/S indicates that cumulative impacts of the project’s emissions would not result in an exceedance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for criteria pollutants for any of the project alternatives. Ambient air quality is expected to improve at the regional level due to increasing regulatory controls despite new sources of pollution. The difference in modeled air emissions (including CO<sub>2</sub>) among the alternatives is less than 0.2 percent and the percent change in emissions between the build without mitigation and the Build with Smart Growth alternative is less than 0.1 percent at a regional level, indicating no substantial difference in impacts to air quality. As noted above, the GHG analysis of mobile emissions for induced growth and smart growth has not yet been completed.

The proposed smart growth measures for the project would reduce the amount of land that would otherwise be developed in the region. Land use impacts associated with the project under the high and low smart growth scenario are estimated to be: 31,168 – 35,349 acres (Attleboro); 31,297 – 35,321 acres (Stoughton); and 31,058 – 35,051 acres (Rapid Bus), an improvement of approximately five percent over the “business as usual” development scenario. The preferred Stoughton route is expected to result in an additional loss of 1,233 acres of land compared to the no-build alternative. However, if smart growth measures are implemented as proposed for the Stoughton alternative, the DEIR/S estimates a reduction of approximately 9,674 acres in land lost to development, compared with development patterns associated with the “business as usual” scenario. Implementation of smart growth measures as proposed in the DEIR/S, through the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan, is clearly a good strategy to advance environmental protection in concert with anticipated economic development, and if successful will contribute to mitigation for project-related indirect impacts. The smart growth aspects of the mitigation plan should be further developed in the FEIR.

#### South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan

The DEIR/S outlines strategies to promote smart growth including targeted state investments, a regional mitigation bank for private projects to support the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan (Corridor Plan), technical assistance to expand affordable housing and economic development opportunities, open space preservation,



and station area planning, and a regional Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to steer growth into areas appropriate for development (PDAs) and out of sensitive areas (PPAs). The South Coast Rail Corridor Plan received approval from the Governor in September 2010 with the signing of Executive Order 525 and \$320,000 in grants for smart growth assistance to communities in the south coast region. Executive Order 525 directs state agencies to review their policies, actions and investments to support and implement the recommendations of the Corridor Plan. Investments include, but are not limited to, water, wastewater, transportation, housing and economic development funding and land preservation funding. The FEIR should expand upon implementation of the Corridor Plan in conjunction with the proposed rail project as outlined in the Scope below.

### Air Quality

The DEIR/S includes a mesoscale analysis that evaluates regional air quality impacts of the project alternatives with respect to emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Nitrous oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), Carbon monoxide (CO) Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulate matter (PM). The analysis includes existing and future conditions in the study area. A microscale analysis was also conducted to look at hot spot areas where increases in CO and PM may occur at congested locations such as roadway intersections, and in the vicinity of stations and layover facilities. The DEIR/S evaluates air quality impacts in the context of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The DEIR/S explains the methodology used for the meso and micro-scale analyses and includes model input data in the appendices. The vehicle emission factors used were obtained using EPA's Mobile 6.2 emissions model and are adjusted to reflect Massachusetts-specific conditions such as vehicle age distribution, the statewide maintenance and inspection program, and Stage II Vapor Recovery System.

The microscale analysis used the EPA computer model CAL3QHC to predict CO and PM concentrations at receptor locations at each intersection in the study area, which included 12 intersections in the vicinity of proposed stations. The EPA atmospheric model AERMOD was used to model locomotive emissions at stations, layover facilities and environmentally sensitive areas such as the Hockomock Swamp. Mobile vehicle emissions were modeled using EPA's Mobile 6.2 emission factor model and the Central Regional Planning Staff (CTPS) regional travel demand model.

The DEIR/S includes the results of air quality analyses for the No-Build/Enhanced Bus, rail alternatives and the Rapid Bus alternatives, as well as stations and layover facilities. The analysis indicates that all alternatives would comply with the Clean Air Act Amendments and will not create any new violations of the NAAQS. The electric trains produce less pollutant emissions than the diesel rail and Rapid Bus alternatives. With regard to the microscale analysis for hotspot locations, the electric trains will not generate emissions locally that would affect receptor locations near the proposed stations. The diesel rail alternatives would result in an increase of CO, NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate matter at receptor locations in the vicinity of layover facilities and stations. The DEIR/S indicates that maximum concentrations (2016) would be below the NAAQS.



The DEIR/S analyzes ridership demand and changes in travel patterns for the various alternatives to develop a projection for reduction in Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) as a result of the proposed project. The VMT reductions correspond to a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to shifts from automobile to transit use. At the regional level, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (mobile vehicles) are estimated at 27,800,000 tons per year (tpy) for the No-Build/Enhanced Bus. The Stoughton Electric alternative performs best in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction with an estimated 59,715 tons per year reduction compared to the 2030 No-Build/Enhanced bus alternative. The Whittenton Electric provides a reduction of 45,584 tons per year (tpy) of CO<sub>2</sub>. The Stoughton Diesel provides a reduction of 44,007 tpy compared to 32,601 tpy for Whittenton Diesel and 6,588 tpy for the Rapid Bus (diesel) alternative. The difference in GHG reductions can be attributed primarily to the VMT reductions gained by the alternatives. The Stoughton Electric obtains a reduction of 295,922 VMT daily in 2030 compared with a reduction of 228,018 for the Whittenton Electric. The Diesel alternatives achieve reductions of 228,705 VMT daily (Stoughton), 173,961 VMT (Whittenton) and 81,495 VMT (Rapid Bus). The time of travel from the South Coast to Boston appears to be a significant factor in influencing ridership and the resultant VMT reductions. The Stoughton Electric attracts more riders from New Bedford and Fall River compared with the Whittenton alternative, hence the better VMT and CO<sub>2</sub> reductions as people who would otherwise drive the longer distance from those areas are switching to the train.

An analysis of greenhouse gases from stationary sources was not conducted. The DEIR/S indicates this is because no buildings are proposed for the stations. MassDOT has committed to use train engine plug-ins and electric block heaters at layover facilities. Additional analysis of GHG emissions and mitigation should be included in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.

### Transportation

The DEIR/S includes a detailed analysis of transportation in the region addressing existing conditions as well as historical and future trends. Mitigation measures are proposed for roadways and intersections that would be most impacted by traffic associated each of the alternatives. The DEIR/S presents MassDOT's case for the need for the project based on adverse roadway and related air quality conditions, transit mode choice and equity, and implementation of the Commonwealth's Transportation policies. The analysis documents the growth in traffic volume over the past decade, which is 2-3 percent overall and 5 percent in some communities, that has created roadway congestion on the limited set of highways connecting commuters from the southeast region to Boston and Cambridge. These consistently congested conditions result in a Level of Service (LOS) of F and increased vehicular accidents on the three major highways serving the south coast. There has been an overall increase of seven percent in accidents, injuries and fatalities during the 2004-2006 study period with some routes showing increases of almost 30 percent in accidents or fatalities. Fall River and New Bedford had the first and third highest number of vehicle crashes during this period. As new households continue to be added to the region, the projected growth in commuter trips and VMT will exacerbate existing congestion problems, further compromising automobile safety and increasing emissions of mobile source pollutants that have an adverse impact on air quality and climate change.



### Endangered Species

The DEIR/S includes the results of an endangered species impact assessment that investigated areas of mapped habitat within 100 feet of the right-of-way (ROW) of rail and Rapid Bus project alternatives. The DEIR/S identifies 15 Priority Habitats within the study area and 15 Estimated Habitats. Thirteen state-listed species are documented to occur within these habitats, including amphibians, reptiles, crustaceans, dragonflies, butterflies, moths, and plants. These species are likely to occur adjacent to the ROW (defined in the DEIR/S as within 100 feet of the centerline of the ROW). Additional state-listed species may occur beyond that radius and may be impacted by habitat alteration associated with project construction and operation. The DEIR/S identifies 16 additional state-listed species for which habitat may be found adjacent to the project corridor.

None of the proposed station sites are located within mapped habitat of state-listed species, except for Raynham Place where the platform is located within mapped habitat. The DEIR/S indicates the Raynham Place station site is previously developed and does not provide potential habitat. The DEIR/S identifies five potential alternatives for layover facilities in New Bedford, Fall River and Freetown, none of which are located within mapped habitat. The mid-day bus layover facility for the Rapid Bus alternative is not within mapped habitat. A mid-day layover facility in Boston has yet to be identified but it is unlikely to be located within mapped habitat as noted in the DEIR/S.

The state-listed species known to occur in areas intersecting or adjacent to the ROW of project alternatives include the Blue-Spotted Salamander (special concern), the Marbled Salamander (threatened), the Wood Turtle (special concern), Blanding's Turtle (threatened), Eastern Box Turtle (special concern), Coastal Swamp Amphipod (special concern), Mocha Emerald (special concern), Hessel's Hairstreak (butterfly of special concern), Pale Green Pinion Moth (special concern), Water Willow Stem Borer (moth of special concern), Gypsywort (endangered plant), Long-leaved Panic Grass (threatened), and Long's Bulrush (threatened).

The DEIR/S describes the methodology used to assess impacts to endangered species and their habitats. As noted in the NHESP comment letter, there are some issues relating to the methodology that should be resolved in consultation with NHESP during FEIR preparation. Some of the measures used in the DEIR/S may not provide a meaningful basis for comparing state-listed species impacts among the various alternatives. These measures include (1) the total acreage of Priority Habitat impacted with or without existing disturbed areas included, and (2) the individual species impact assessments based on vegetation cover types. NHESP has recommended that the Barrier Effect Grade shown in Table 3.3-24, and the NHESP scores and overall assessment of "Habitat Functions Lost" (see tables in Section 4.15.3.5) be used for evaluating the alternatives. Based on these measures, the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives have similar levels of impact on state-listed species, which are substantially greater than those of the Attleboro or Rapid Bus Alternatives.

The DEIR/S quantifies potential habitat loss for the various alternatives. Upgrades to rail lines on the Southern Triangle, common to all rail alternatives, will result in foraging, breeding/nesting, and wintering habitat loss, including approximately 2 acres in areas along the



Fall River Secondary and 5.1 acres along the New Bedford Main Line. One traction power station is located within Priority and Estimated Habitat and would result in 0.8 acres of habitat loss in the Southern Triangle. The DEIR/S identifies potential impacts including increased mortality of turtles crossing tracks and increased mortality of moths and butterflies due to herbicide use near streams and wetland habitat.

The Rapid Bus Alternative impacts an estimated 16.2 acres of mapped state-listed species habitat, which is comprised of edge habitat in the vicinity of existing roadways. The Attleboro Alternative, eliminated for operational infeasibility, would have impacted approximately 30 acres of habitat. However, these alternatives would run within or immediately adjacent to existing active rail lines (Attleboro) or existing highways (Rapid Bus). Although these alternatives might impact some Priority Habitat areas, NHESP indicates that the endangered species impacts and habitat fragmentation effects would be modest, especially in comparison to the Stoughton Alternative.

The Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives impact both edge and interior habitats, and are comparable in terms of their impacts to rare species habitat. Either alignment would result in approximately 30 acres of impact to state-listed species habitat and are similar in terms of the quality of habitat affected. While the Whittenton route avoids impacts to habitat of the Hessel's Hairstreak in Pine Swamp it would impact additional Box Turtle habitat. NHESP has indicated in its comment letter that rare species impacts should not be a deciding factor in choosing among the Stoughton Direct route and Whittenton variation.

The DEIR/S describes rare species studies conducted in 2001 and 2008 along the proposed Stoughton line in areas where there is currently no track, as well as studies conducted for the Attleboro Alternative. The 2001 studies in Hockomock and Pine Swamps included an area within 600 feet of the right-of-way centerline. The Stoughton direct route crosses two Priority Habitats including land within the Hockomock Swamp and Pine Swamp, and the Whittenton Alternative crosses the Three Mile River ACEC and the Hockomock Swamp. Construction of the preferred Stoughton route would result in the loss of habitat of five state-listed species on the proposed alignment north of Weir Junction as well as potential habitat of nine state-listed species adjacent to the corridor in the Southern Triangle. The Stoughton route results in direct loss of an estimated 3.4 acres of habitat in Hockomock Swamp and 22.1 acres within the Pine Swamp, for a total of 25.5 acres of Priority and Estimated Habitat (including one traction station proposed in the Hockomock Swamp). Indirect impacts associated with the proposed Stoughton rail include loss of migratory routes (barrier effect) and increase in habitat fragmentation resulting from construction within currently undeveloped forested land. Widening of the canopy gap for construction and Right-of-Way (ROW) maintenance as well as clearing in the vicinity of vernal pools is likely to cause additional indirect impacts.

The DEIR/S outlines potential mitigation measures for the preferred Stoughton route, which include an 8,500 linear foot trestle in the Hockomock Swamp, construction of wildlife passages and nesting sites, acquisition of land or conservation restrictions to protect critical habitats, habitat enhancement, contribution to a mitigation bank for species protection, funding research programs to benefit state-listed species, and construction-related measures to avoid and minimize impacts. Detailed mitigation plans should be included in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.



### Wetlands

The DEIR includes a description of wetland systems identified along the proposed alignment for the rail and the Rapid Bus alternatives, and at the proposed station and layover sites. A quantitative analysis is provided as well as summary information on wetland functions and values with graphics illustrating each segment of rail or roadway. The DEIR/S describes the assessment methodology and discusses approaches to mitigation in the context of state and federal regulatory requirements, including the criteria for a variance from Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) performance standards. The DEIR/S documents that there are no project alternatives that could proceed without a variance and presents information to support MassDOT's contention that the project serves an over-riding public interest. Mitigation measures to address the variance criteria have not yet been developed. The FEIR should include additional information and analysis to support MassDOT's variance request as outlined in the Scope below.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Highway Methodology was used including the guidance on evaluation of functions and values contained in the USACE New England District's Highway Methodology Workbook Supplement (1999). Each of the alternative project corridors was assessed for the presence of wetlands within 100 feet of the right-of-way. Permanent and temporary impacts are addressed and indirect and cumulative impacts are evaluated as noted above in the review of the indirect impact assessment.

The Southern Triangle is common to all rail alternatives. Direct impacts to wetlands associated with the proposed upgrades to the Fall River Secondary line are estimated in the DEIR/S to amount to 2.72 acres of permanent Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and 2.68 of temporary BVW alteration; 0.45 acres of permanent Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) alteration and 0.26 of temporary ORW alteration; 3.25 acres of permanent Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) and 1.25 acres of temporary BLSF alteration; and 1,146 linear feet of Bank impact. The volume of BLSF alteration is not quantified in the DEIR/S. Approximately 2 acres of the permanent BVW impact occurs within wooded swamp along the Freetown section of the alignment. The DEIR/S identifies 34 stream crossings along the Fall River Secondary, including 11 perennial streams. Work is proposed within Riverfront Area at all perennial stream crossings. The ORW impacts are associated with two vernal pools.

The project includes upgrades to the existing New Bedford Main line freight track. Direct wetland impacts associated with these upgrades include: 2.53 acres of permanent BVW alteration and 4.93 acres of temporary BVW alteration; 0.1 acres of permanent ORW impact and 0.17 acres of temporary alteration to ORW; 7.65 acres of permanent BLSF impacts and 2.33 acres of temporary BLSF impacts (volume has yet to be determined); and 832 linear feet of temporary impact to Bank. The traction station for the Stoughton electric alternative requires an additional 0.02 acres of BVW impact. A portion of the ROW passes through the Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary, the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation, and a large wetland system associated with Fall Brook. There are 34 stream crossings associated with the project on the New Bedford Main line, ten of which are perennial and would involve impacts to Riverfront Area. ORW impacts include one vernal pool in Berkeley.



The DEIR/S includes a comparative analysis of wetland impacts associated with the rail and Rapid Bus alternatives. The Attleboro and Rapid Bus alternatives result in the highest amount of BVW impacted with 20.56 acres of 21.48 acres respectively. The Stoughton Electric results in 11.94 acres of direct permanent wetland impact compared with 10.34 acres for the Whittenton alternative. Diesel options have slightly less wetlands alteration as they do not require electric traction stations. As noted in the DEIR/S and in comments received, the quality of habitat impacted is an important consideration in evaluating the significance of impacts and alternatives with less acreage of alteration may actually result in more significant impacts.

The Stoughton Electric preferred alternative, including the Southern Triangle and the corridor north of Weir Junction, will result in: permanent alteration of 11.84 acres of BVW and temporary alteration of 12.55 acres of BVW; 1.7 acres of permanent ORW impact and 2.63 of temporary ORW impact; 1.72 acres of permanent impact to wetlands within an ACEC; 23.33 acres of permanent BLSF alteration and 6.1 acres of temporary BLSF alteration (volume of BLSF to be determined in FEIR). Within the Hockomock Swamp in Raynham and Easton, in areas where an elevated trestle is not being proposed, the Stoughton route results in permanent alteration of 1.74 acres of BVW and 0.57 acres of temporary impact. As with the Southern Triangle portion of the route, the greatest impacts north of Weir Junction are in wooded swamps along the proposed rail alignment. In addition to direct impacts, the DEIR/S includes an analysis of indirect impacts and estimates that an additional 13 acres of wetlands would be impacted by induced growth associated with the rail project (for a total of 25.35 acres of impact). Biodiversity impacts are estimated at 3 acres for every one acre of land consumption, which would translate to degradation in biodiversity value of approximately 76 acres of land as a result of the project's direct permanent impacts and induced growth-related impacts to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands.

The DEIR/S includes a conceptual watershed approach to wetlands mitigation and indicates that the Stoughton Electric Alternative would require 23.57 acres of compensatory wetlands mitigation under state guidelines and 33 acres under federal guidelines for permanent resource impacts. Based on MassDOT's assessment, mitigation would be required in the Buzzards Bay Watershed (1.42 acres), Mount Hope Bay Watershed (0.27 acres), Neponset River Watershed (0.18 acres), and the Taunton River Watershed (21.7 acres). During preparation of the DEIR/S and based on consultations with state and federal agencies, the MEPA Office agreed with the Proponent that, in the case of this project, it would be difficult to develop very detailed plans for mitigation until the alternatives analysis was complete and a single preferred alternative identified for further analysis in the FEIR. As outlined in the Scope below, detailed wetland mitigation plans are required in the FEIR as well as public outreach by MassDOT during preparation of the draft plans.

#### Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat

The DEIR/S includes a description of bioregions (or ecoregions) within the study area, which include the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, the Hockomock Important Bird Areas (IBA), the Freetown/Fall River State Forest and Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve IBA, Biomap Core Habitats, and Living Waters Core Habitats. The DEIR/S also includes an overview of plant communities, wetland and upland cover types, vernal pools, and wildlife including fish and bird species within the study area.



The Southern Triangle portion of the project involves upgrades to the New Bedford Main and Fall River Secondary lines, which pass through or adjacent to several areas of core habitat including the Acushnet Cedar Swamp, Assonet Cedar Swamp, Forge Pond, Turner Pond, and Freetown/Fall River State Forest. The New Bedford Main Line is adjacent to a large unfragmented wetland in Berkley and crosses Cotley River, Cedar Swamp River, Fall Brook and Assonet River, which are all important fisheries habitats.

The Stoughton Alternative includes improvements to existing active freight lines (track sections from Dean Street in Taunton to Cotley Junction, and north of Stoughton Station), as well as construction of tracks for commuter rail on an abandoned ROW between Dean Street and Stoughton Station. The DEIR/S indicates that the ROW provides suitable migratory habitat for wildlife because there are no ties and tracks to prevent turtles, amphibians, and small mammals from moving across the ROW. The DEIR/S indicates that the ROW does not likely provide suitable nesting, breeding or foraging habitat due in part to erosion resulting from unauthorized use by All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), bicycles and pedestrians. The Stoughton Route crosses through Core Habitat in the Hockomock Swamp and Pine Swamp in Raynham. It crosses the Hockomock Swamp for approximately 1.6 miles and crosses three miles of Biomap Core Habitat within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC, as well as approximately one mile in the Pine Swamp and Core Habitat BM1196. The Stoughton Alternative crosses Taunton River, mapped by NHESP as a Living Water Core Habitat and identified as a fisheries habitat. Other fisheries habitat crossed by the Stoughton Alternative include Whitman Brook, Queset Brook, Black Brook, Pine Swamp Brook, and Mill River. The DEIR/S includes information on thirty-eight vernal pools identified along the Stoughton route (from Taunton north), mostly within the Hockomock Swamp. The Stoughton alternative also crosses and is adjacent to large wetland and upland areas in Stoughton and Easton including the Stoughton Memorial Conservation Land, which includes the Bird Street Conservation Land.

The DEIR/S discusses potential direct impacts such as vegetation clearing and site grading and impacts related to culvert and bridge construction or reconstruction. The DEIR/S estimates a direct loss of 88.46 acres of habitat along the Stoughton Electric route between Weir Junction and Stoughton Station. Approximately 31.68 acres of upland forested non-breeding habitat between 100 and 750 feet of 82 vernal pools would be lost, the majority of this would be north of Raynham Junction. The amount of fill to vernal pools along this section of the route is estimated to be 1.31 acres, which is associated with 16 vernal pools. Approximately 13.75 acres of buffer habitat within 100 feet of 29 vernal pools will be lost as a result of the project. Total loss of habitat for the Stoughton route, including the Southern Triangle is estimated to be 182.27 acres (upland), 11.86 acres (wetland), 1.77 acres (vernal pools), and 55.04 acres (supporting vernal pool upland habitat).

Indirect impacts such as fragmentation and edge effects, wildlife movement and migratory barrier effects are also discussed in the DEIR/S. The Stoughton Alternative will result in barriers to wildlife movement and related fragmentation impacts. It will also increase canopy gap through portions of the Hockomock Swamp in areas where the forest canopy has closed since abandonment of the historic rail line, resulting in edge effects with changes in light, temperature and humidity.



An analysis of biodiversity value and potential impacts of project alternatives was conducted by University of Massachusetts, Amherst using CAPS (the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System). The analysis was conducted for baseline conditions, and for the Attleboro, Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives. The study area included the entire Taunton watershed and a 5 kilometer buffer around all rail lines for the alternative routes. The Stoughton and Whittenton variation were modeled with and without a trestle through the Hockomock Swamp. The CAPS analysis provides a quantitative assessment of ecological integrity to compare the relative habitat impacts of alternative development scenarios and/or the benefits of habitat management or environmental restoration options. It is a useful tool for environmental impact assessment and decision-making. CAPS defines ecological integrity as the ability of an area to support biodiversity and the ecosystem processes necessary to sustain biodiversity, over the long term. The output of the analysis is an Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI), based on a model that takes into account connectivity between various points on the landscape, habitat type and similarity, influence of nearby roads and traffic, and other metrics related to ecology and development. The CAPS model assigns a value of 0 to 1 for each point in the landscape, based on the ability of a point to serve as wildlife habitat, and generates an IEI score. Locations with the best habitat score 1.0 and lower quality habitat scores are closer to 0. Direct and indirect effects of the project degrade the value of that landscape point (or cell) to serve as wildlife habitat (as do other stressors such as roadways).

The DEIR/S includes the results of the CAPS analysis as well as a description of the methodology and assumptions. Overall, the two routes through Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity, followed by the Attleboro route with considerably less influence (77-80% of the loss associated with the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives). The trestle alternatives through Hockomock Swamp reduced the modeled loss of ecological integrity somewhat, although many of the benefits of a trestle are likely to occur at a local scale below that of the CAPS analysis. Since a large section of the route, the Southern Triangle, is common to all the rail alternatives, the ecological integrity loss was also calculated for those portions of the alternative routes that are not in common. Excluding the Southern Triangle, the loss in ecological integrity ranges from 206.8 units for the Attleboro Alternative to 312.1 units for Stoughton (no trestle) and 319.5 units for Whittenton (without trestle). When the trestle is included, the modeled loss in ecological integrity for Whittenton is 309.2 units and for the Stoughton Alternative it is 302 units. The Southern Triangle results in an IEI loss of 172.5 units for a total estimated project loss of 474.5 units associated with the preferred Stoughton Alternative. The Rapid Bus was not analyzed and was assumed to have minimal loss in biodiversity compared to the rail alternatives because it would operate along existing roadways and habitat impacts would occur near areas that are already degraded.

The biodiversity analysis splits the project-related loss in ecological integrity into direct and indirect loss. The direct loss is primarily associated with the proposed stations. Most of the projected loss overall is associated with indirect impacts. The Stoughton route with the trestle will result in a loss of approximately 17.6 units of ecological integrity from direct impacts and 456.9 units will be lost as a result of indirect impacts. At MassDEP's request, UMass Amherst evaluated the degree to which important habitat (with IEI>0.6) in the baseline assessment would be compromised as a result of the Stoughton alternative's one-mile transit of the Pine Swamp, a 275-acre unfragmented high quality wetland that is avoided by the Whittenton route. The results



indicated that while the Whittenton route impacts 7 more units (compared to Stoughton), the Stoughton route would impact 13.5 additional units that had a high value for wildlife habitat. As noted in MassDEP's letter, UMass calculates that the loss of 13.5 units would be equivalent to 18 acres of Pine Swamp no longer being characterized as important wildlife habitat (i.e. not in the top 40 percent of IEI scores).

Based on the biodiversity analysis, the proposed Stoughton Alternative will result in substantial direct and indirect ecological impacts for which mitigation should be provided. MassDOT should develop targeted mitigation plans as outlined in the Wetlands and Biodiversity and other sections of the Scope below.

#### Water Quality and Public Water Supplies

The DEIR/S concludes that the Stoughton Alternative, which involves temporary construction activities within one Zone A area, Zone II areas for six wells, and the Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) for two wells, would not result in long-term impacts to water supply. During post-construction operations, the project will discharge stormwater to these same water supply protection areas as well as ten different waterbodies including one ORW within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC and the East Branch of the Neponset River in the Fowl Meadow ACEC. One new station in Easton is proposed within a Zone II area. MassDEP, in its comment letter, concurs with the DEIR/S conclusion that with comprehensive and early planning and design of adequate containment, minimization and mitigation measures and consistent implementation of maintenance procedures, the proposed project will not result in impairment of surface and groundwater quality or functions. Additional information on compliance with stormwater standards is required in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.

#### Article 97 lands

For each of the project alternatives, the DEIR/S identifies land impacted by the project that is protected under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. Portions of three protected open spaces and publicly owned land within one ACEC subject to the EEA Policy are proposed for acquisition as part of the Stoughton Alternative. Three of these parcels would be used for traction power substations.

#### Environmental Justice

The DEIR/S includes information on environmental justice populations in the project area, discusses relevant state and federal policies, and analyzes potential impacts to environmental justice populations with a comparative analysis of the effects of the various alternatives. The DEIR/S identifies areas in which there will be a disproportionate impact to environmental justice populations as a result of noise and vibration, and describes the potential benefits in terms of economic development and improved access to transportation, jobs and education. Environmental Justice neighborhoods are located in Attleboro, Canton, Fall River, Mansfield, New Bedford, Stoughton, and Taunton. The DEIR/S evaluates impacts related to neighborhood fragmentation, noise level increases, and residence or job losses associated with property acquisition. The analysis examines whether adverse impacts will be predominantly

borne, or experienced in more severity, by Environmental Justice populations in comparison to non-EJ populations in the same communities.

The Southern Triangle portion of the project contains a larger Environmental Justice population compared to areas further north along the alignment; 36 percent of the Environmental Justice population is around the Fall River Secondary and 50.4 percent around the New Bedford Main Line. Populations include those meeting the low income criteria as well as minority populations. 88.7 percent of Fall River's population live within Environmental Justice-designated neighborhoods.

Of the populations affected by noise impacts associated with the electric rail on the Fall River Secondary, 34.7 percent are Environmental Justice residences and 65.4 percent are not (for the diesel alternative it is 36 and 64 percent respectively). For the electric rail on the New Bedford Main line, the number of impacted Environmental Justice residences is 9.2 percent of the total while non- Environmental Justice residences account for 90.8 percent of residences affected (6.3 and 93.3 percent respectively for the diesel alternative). Impacts to Environmental Justice residences in Taunton account for 10.5 (electric) and 10.8 (diesel) percent of the total residences impacted. In New Bedford, the Environmental Justice residences account for 18.8 percent (electric) and 14 percent (diesel) of the total number of impacted residences.

The DEIR/S indicates that vibration impacts to residences could be mitigated by using ballast mats beneath the rail lines and "frogs" at selected switch locations as well as special pile-driving methods to reduce construction-related impacts. The electric alternatives will not adversely affect local air quality in Environmental Justice neighborhoods. Diesel alternatives will result in increased CO and particulate matter at the local level.

The noise impact analysis for the Stoughton Electric alternative concluded that 1,525 residences would be impacted by moderate and severe noise levels. The number of Environmental Justice residences affected is 110, approximately 7.2 percent of the total. Raynham and Easton do not contain Environmental Justice populations. The percent of noise-impacted residences within Environmental Justice neighborhoods in Stoughton is 25.1 percent and in Taunton it is 11.3 percent. The numbers for the diesel alternative are 25.8 percent and 4.3 percent for Stoughton and Taunton respectively. The Whittenton Electric alternative in comparison would result in moderate or severe impacts to 494 residences within Environmental Justice neighborhoods in Taunton, representing 36.4 percent of the total residences affected in that community. The Whittenton diesel results in noise impacts to 506 residences in Taunton (36.5 percent of the total residences affected). The Rapid Bus alternative does not result in adverse noise impacts to Environmental Justice communities.

The proposed Battleship Cove and Whale's Tooth stations in New Bedford, the King's Highway Station, the Fall River Depot, and the Taunton Station are expected to catalyze redevelopment and improve access to transit, as well as employment and educational opportunities for Environmental Justice populations in the area. Data included in the DEIR/S indicates that 20.7 percent of households in Fall River do not own a car compared with the state-wide average of 12.7 percent. The DEIR/S projects that the value of homes in the vicinity of proposed stations will increase as a result of the project and related TOD.



The DEIR/S evaluates potential impacts relating to property acquisition and concludes that acquiring nine parcels as proposed in Fall River will result in a tax revenue loss for the City which would affect financial resource availability for the surrounding Environmental Justice neighborhood. The acquisition of commercial and industrial buildings on the properties may also result in job losses for the nearby Environmental Justice population. The proposed Fall River Depot station is expected to spur growth and catalyze redevelopment of the waterfront area.

The DEIR/S evaluates time of travel for the various alternatives in relation to access to jobs for populations in New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton. The study concludes that the Fall River Environmental Justice populations will benefit the most and New Bedford the least in terms of improved access to basic jobs. The greatest improvement would be realized through the Stoughton Electric because of its faster travel time and projected ridership from the three communities.

The analysis in the DEIR/S concludes that Environmental Justice communities, at a regional level, would not be disproportionately affected by the proposed project. However, at a local community level, Environmental Justice communities in Stoughton would be disproportionately affected by noise relative to non- Environmental Justice communities in that municipality. The Whittenton alternative would result in even greater noise impacts to Environmental Justice communities. The noise impacts in Fall River would be predominantly borne by Environmental Justice residences. Mitigation measures for noise and vibration impacts should be further evaluated and committed to as outlined in the Scope below.

### Coastal Resources

The Fall River Secondary crosses approximately 4,100 feet of filled tidelands in seven locations and three non-tidal rivers and streams potentially subject to Chapter 91 Jurisdiction. Approximately 6.6 miles of the Fall River Secondary (in three segments) is located within the Coastal Zone and a total of 0.5 miles of the Fall River Secondary near the southern end of the project area is located within the Mount Hope Bay Designated Port Area (approximately 2,100 feet near Weaver's Cove and 500 feet near Battleship Cove). The New Bedford Main Line crosses several areas of filled tidelands south of Wamsutta Street in New Bedford (approximately 3,900 feet of filled tidelands in four locations) and five potentially jurisdictional non-tidal rivers and streams.

The DEIR/S describes the proposed work at each crossing and provides a summary of the potential approvals necessary under Chapter 91 and the Coastal Zone Management Program. Certain Chapter 91 jurisdictional and licensing issues remain unclear and MassDOT should address these with MassDEP and in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope. The DEIR/S indicates that the Stoughton line (north of southern triangle) is entirely within inland communities and does not include any work within filled tidelands, flowed tidelands or the Massachusetts Coastal Zone. However, there are nine crossings of non-tidal rivers that may be subject to Chapter 91.

The DEIR/S discusses proposed work at stations and layovers and consistency with regulatory standards and policies. Additional information is required in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below. Four of the proposed station sites are located on filled tidelands or are within



the Massachusetts Coastal Zone: Battleship Cove, Fall River Depot, Freetown, and Whale's Tooth. Battleship Cove and Whale's Tooth station sites include landlocked tidelands, and require a Public Benefits Determination. Four of the alternative layover sites are located within filled tidelands and require evaluation for Chapter 91 jurisdiction and compliance and consistency with Coastal Zone Management policies. The Wamsutta, New Bedford layover facility is within landlocked tidelands.

### Cultural Resources

The DEIR/S includes a detailed evaluation of historic and archaeological resources in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and identifies specific historic districts and buildings that may be adversely affected by the project, as well as sites of cultural value to Native American people. The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah has indicated that the Hockomock Swamp and the Pine Swamp are regarded as traditionally culturally sensitive lands. Impacts to traditional cultural properties will be determined based on further consultation with the Tribes. The DEIR/S indicates that properties within historic districts that will be impacted by noise and vibration will be further evaluated in the FEIR. The project will have direct and indirect, as well as temporary and permanent, impacts on above-ground historic resources. Impacts evaluated in the DEIR/S include noise and vibration, traffic, visual, physical modifications, and air quality.

Based on the analysis in the DEIR/S, traffic and air quality impacts to historic and archaeological resources are expected to be minor. Temporary vibration impacts during construction may result in vibration levels that could cause structural damage in the vicinity of certain bridges. The DEIR/S evaluates project elements that may cause permanent impacts to viewsheds including catenary and other electrification infrastructure, vegetation clearing, grade crossings and traffic controls, noise walls, parking lots, and new building construction.

The DEIR/S identifies historic properties impacted by each alternative and describes those potentially eligible for National Register listing. The Southern Triangle affects 32 areas/districts and 214 individual properties of which 14 and 17 respectively are listed in National Register (NR) or considered eligible (8 areas/districts and 26 individual properties in the Southern Triangle are considered ineligible for NR listing. The Stoughton/Whittenton route affects 34 areas/districts and 267 individual properties of which 4 and 16 respectively are listed as NR eligible (16 areas/districts and 12 individual properties are not NR eligible). The Rapid Bus affects 2 historic area/districts and the Attleboro alternative affects 22 historic areas/districts as well as 221 individual properties within districts. The DEIR/S indicates that changes to infrastructure and the introduction of new structures along the Stoughton Line will have indirect visual effects on the H.H. Richardson Historic District. The design of project station and parking/drop-off areas will introduce new modern rail elements that will have a visual adverse effect on Ames Shovel Shop and North Easton station. DEIR also identifies historic properties that would experience moderate to severe noise impacts

The DEIR/S recommends an intensive survey for areas/districts and individual resources that have been identified as potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The DEIR/S recommends additional survey work to inform consultation between the Corps and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) on the NR eligibility of resources and



determinations of effect on resources. Work is proposed prior to completion of environmental review and when more detailed design information is available. The methodology will include additional background research and field survey to analyze the integrity, historical context, and significance criteria met for each resource.

The DEIR/S includes a summary of the archaeologically sensitivity of the APE. Some locations contain moderate and high sensitivity areas for potentially significant pre-contact sites and documented/recorded post-contact areas. The Hockomock and Pine Swamps include sensitive terraces for pre-contact sites that may be traditional cultural places for Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah. High sensitivity areas in the Southern Triangle include Whale's Tooth Station, Wamsutta Layover facility, and historic cemeteries on the New Bedford Main Line. Proposed station sites in Easton North Easton and Taunton Depot are identified as moderate to high sensitivity. The DEIR/S indicates that the Corps will be addressing traditional cultural properties in a separate document pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional archaeological studies will be completed prior to the FEIR.

The Stoughton Electric Alternative would result in direct impacts (adverse effects) to six historic properties, primarily historic bridges that would require reconstruction or widening, and potential direct impacts at some existing stations that would need to be reconstructed. In addition, this alternative would have indirect effects to an additional 62 properties as a result of changes in setting and/or increased noise that could affect the setting directly or require noise mitigation that could affect the appearance or setting of a building. It could affect two known archaeological sites for reconstruction of the Fall River Secondary. Archaeological resources could potentially be affected at other areas of archaeological sensitivity along the Stoughton Line, and at three station locations. The DEIR/S discusses potential mitigation strategies and measures to avoid and minimize impacts during construction and noted that additional detailed plans will be provided in the FEIR.

### Noise and Vibration

The DEIR/S includes an analysis of noise and vibration impacts associated with the project alternatives. The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Guidelines were used to evaluate existing conditions and assess potential impacts of the project. The DEIR/S describes the methodology for the study and the land use categories and metrics for evaluating transit-related impacts, as well as including information on background noise levels and monitoring locations. The analysis assumed that horns would be sounded at all proposed grade crossings. Using the FTA guidelines, impacts are categorized as severe, moderate, or no impact depending on the projected increased level of exposure compared to existing noise levels.

In the Southern Triangle, common to all alternatives, electric train operations (operating train noise without horns) would result in 298 moderate and 63 severe impacts to residential receptors along the New Bedford Main line segment. Diesel train impacts are lower with estimates of 194 moderate and 38 severe impacts. Train horns along this segment will add 93 moderate and 76 severe impacts. Electric train operations for the Fall River Secondary will result in 581 moderate and 155 severe impacts to residential receptors. The majority of these occur in



Fall River, in the Cory and Durfee Street neighborhoods. Diesel operations are comparable with 570 moderate and 181 severe impacts. Train horns along this corridor will result in additional impacts of 98 moderate and 164 severe horn impacts. Electric train operations for the Stoughton line segment result in 441 moderate and 190 severe impacts to residential receptors, the majority occurring in Raynham and Easton, in the Elm Street (Easton), Bridge Street and Elm Street (Raynham) neighborhoods. Train horns along the Stoughton line segment will add 437 moderate and 457 severe impacts. Due to lower operating speeds, the diesel alternative has lower noise levels and will result in 335 moderate and 128 severe impacts. The Whittenton alternative has greater noise impacts to residents compared with Stoughton as a portion of the route diverts and affects additional receptors in Easton and Taunton. The Whittenton Electric train results in 530 moderate and 199 severe noise impacts as well as 828 moderate horn impacts and 1,082 severe horn noise impacts. This alternative has 12 at-grade crossings within a short distance in Taunton, hence the additional noise impacts. The Whittenton diesel train results in 492 moderate and 151 severe impacts in addition to the horn impacts. The Rapid Bus operations are not expected to result in any noticeable increase in noise levels for residential receptors.

The DEIR/S estimates noise impacts to residential receptors in the vicinity of the layover sites. One moderate impact to a receptor near the Weavers Cove East site is projected and no noticeable impacts to receptors near the other layover sites. Temporary construction noise impacts are also expected and control measures will be developed with noise guidelines incorporated into construction documents. The DEIR/S discusses potential noise mitigation measures in general for the train operational impacts. Additional evaluation is required for the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.

The DEIR/S includes information on the vibration measurements conducted to evaluate existing conditions. Projected vibration levels are compared to FTA criteria which indicate that 80 Velocity level in decibel units (VdB) is a level at which human annoyance is experienced for residential receptors exposed to infrequent events (less than 30 per day). The criteria are lower for more frequent events. The DEIR/S indicates that most of the vibration impacts are in the 80-83 VdB range. For receptors closer to the tracks, levels are in the 85-89 Vdb range. The DEIR/S provides the FTA criteria indicating that 90 VdB typically elicits human response of difficulty with tasks such as reading a computer screen and 100 Vdb is the level at which minor cosmetic damage to fragile buildings may occur. The vibration assessment of the track switches indicates that one location has a receptor located within 225 feet of a switch that would result in a vibration impact of 80 VdB (residential receptor on Ingall Street near Weir Junction). At the Weaver Cove site, two residential receptors are located within 100 feet of the proposed track switches and one within 225 feet. At the New Bedford Church Street site, two residential receptors are located within 225 feet of the mainline switch.

The DEIR/S includes the results of the vibration impact assessment indicating that 95 residences will be impacted by vibration associated with the project in the southern triangle section of the corridor. North of the Southern Triangle, for the Stoughton line portion of the route, the DEIR/S estimates that 51 receptors will be impacted by vibration levels of 80 VdB or higher. One receptor is a multi-unit apartment building and the others are single-family homes. The residences are located in Stoughton (12), Raynham (13), Easton (17), and Taunton (9). The DEIR/S concludes that station and other historic buildings in Easton Village would experience



impacts below the 100 VdB vibration threshold for the onset of minor structural damage to fragile and historic buildings. The Whittenton route results in similar impacts to the Stoughton direct, and the Attleboro has less vibration impacts overall. The Rapid Bus is not projected to have any noticeable vibration impacts. Additional information on vibration impacts and mitigation should be included in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.

#### Stormwater

The DEIR/S discusses the potential direct and indirect effects on water resources from each of the South Coast Rail project alternatives, and identifies areas where stormwater management systems will be required. The DEIR/S concludes that with mitigation and drainage features in place, none of the Build Alternatives are expected to impair any water resources. The proposed Stoughton alternative will result in 14.4 acres of new impervious area and includes stormwater discharges to two ACEC/ORW waterbodies and nine non-ORW waterbodies, as well as six discharges to Zone II water protection areas and two discharges in Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (IWPA). Additional details on stormwater management should be included in the FEIR as outlined in the Scope below.

#### Farmland Soils

The DEIR/S indicates that the project would not result in significant impact to agricultural lands or convert land from active agriculture to non-agricultural use. The conclusion is based on an evaluation using the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scoring system and the fact that impacted farmland soils are not currently in active agricultural use. The Stoughton Electric route will impact approximately 13 acres of mapped farmland soils primarily associated with the development of the North Easton and Freetown stations, and traction power sites.

#### Oil and Hazardous Materials (OHM)

The DEIR/S provides a summary of each of the proposed alternatives in the context of potential OHM conditions in locations that may be affected by the South Coast Rail alternatives. The DEIR/S describes environmental site assessments conducted along sections of the project alignment as well as at layover and station sites. The DEIR/S describes the methodology and results including specific areas of environmental concern due to historic contamination. The DEIR/S also discusses management of contaminated soils and impacted groundwater in accordance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP). The DEIR/S includes recommendations for further investigations and mitigation measures to be performed prior to and during construction of proposed stations, track segments, and layovers.

#### Station Sites

The proposed Stoughton route includes ten new stations from the existing Stoughton station south to New Bedford and Fall River. Two existing stations, Canton Center and Stoughton will require modifications for the preferred Stoughton route. Proposed new stations consist of high-level platforms (4 feet above track), canopies, commuter parking, a pick-up and drop-off area for buses, and drop-off parking. Platforms will be designed to handle a 9-car train



set (800 feet long approximately). The station designs includes bike storage areas and pedestrian connections to neighboring streets. The Transit Oriented Development (TOD) aspect of the proposed stations will include residential and commercial development.

The proposed Battleship Cove station in Fall River includes a single track and one side platform. This station will not have designated parking, it will allow for pick-up and drop-off only with a driveway access off Water Street. The paved loop driveway will accommodate three 40-foot buses as well as passenger vehicles for pick-up and drop-off. Pedestrian connection improvements to Fall River's central block are proposed which would improve access to Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) Route 6 bus and the Route 7 bus will be extended to the station.

The Canton Center station is an existing station off Washington Street that will be modified for a second track. Two new 800-foot long low-level platforms with mini-high platforms are proposed adjacent to each track. Modifications to existing parking will be required and the existing 210 parking spaces would remain. There is no designated area proposed for bus of vehicular drop-off. A walkway is proposed from the platforms to existing sidewalks on Washington Street.

The new Taunton Depot station will be located off Route 140 at the rear of a shopping plaza and serve walk-in, drive-in and drop-off passengers. A total of 456 parking spaces are proposed. The driveway access will be through the existing Target Plaza with a new driveway behind Target to the new station parking area. The new driveway will accommodate two 40-foot buses. A sidewalk is proposed to connect with the existing sidewalk on Taunton Depot Drive. No feeder bus connection is proposed for this station. One center platform is proposed with a pedestrian bridge over the tracks with stairs and ramps. Triple tracks are proposed (two for commuter rail and one for freight).

The Easton Village Station is proposed immediately south of the historic H.H. Richardson train station on Sullivan Street in Easton. The location is within walking distance of downtown Easton and will serve walk-in and bike-in customers. The DEIR/S proposes using ten of the existing spaces at the historic train station for drop-off and pick-up. The driveway access for the proposed new station is from Sullivan Street and Oliver Street. No bus accommodation is proposed. One side platform and a single track is proposed. Pedestrian access is proposed via ramps connecting to an existing sidewalk on Oliver Street and an existing underpass (under the tracks) to connect with an existing sidewalk on the west side of Sullivan Street. A shuttle bus is proposed for Stonehill College and an extension of the Brockton Area Transit (BAT) Route 9.

The Fall River Depot Station will be located one mile north of downtown Fall River at Route 79 and Davol Street and is the site of an historic train station. A parking deck is proposed to limit surface parking and allow space for future TOD. The station will serve walk-in, bike-in, and drive-in customers. 513 parking spaces are proposed. The driveway access will be off Davol Street and will accommodate up to four 40-foot buses and 10 vehicles for passenger drop-off. One side platform and double track is proposed. Sidewalks will be installed throughout the site and along the frontage of Davol, Pearce, and Turner Streets connecting to existing sidewalks in



the vicinity of the stations. Pedestrian connections will provide access to SRTA Route 2. SRTA Route 14 will be re-routed to access the station.

The proposed Freetown station will be located on South Main Street. The site includes a self-storage business and is near the Fall River Executive Park and the proposed River Front Park. The station will serve drive-in customers and customers shuttled between the station and industrial parks. 174 parking spaces are proposed. The driveway access will be off South Main Street and will handle two 40-foot buses and 8 passenger drop-off vehicles. One side platform and a double track is proposed. Sidewalks are proposed out to South Main Street for future pedestrian connections. The existing SRTA Route 2 will be extended one mile to the proposed station.

The proposed King's Highway Station will be located in northern New Bedford along King's Highway, immediately east of Route 140. The station is located on the site of an existing shopping plaza and will serve walk-in, bike-in and drive-in passengers. 360 parking spaces are proposed. Parking will be shared with an existing movie theater. Access will be from the King's Highway through the existing commercial development to a shared parking area and bus drop-off, which will accommodate two 40-foot buses and 10 drop-off vehicle parking spaces. One side platform and a double track are proposed. Ramps will be installed to connect with sidewalks that will be extended to connect with existing sidewalks. The existing SRTA Route 8 bus and North End shuttle will be extended to connect to the station.

The proposed North Easton station will be located at the rear of the existing Roche Brothers plaza off Route 138. The station will serve primarily drive-in customers although it may attract walk-in customers also from existing and proposed new development on the site as well as nearby residences. 509 parking spaces are proposed and an access driveway from Roche's Brothers Way that will accommodate two 40-foot buses and 10 vehicular drop-off parking spaces. A center platform with pedestrian bridge is proposed as well as a double track and a sidewalk to connect with the existing sidewalk along Roche Bros. Way. No feeder bus connections are proposed for this station.

The proposed Raynham Place Station will be located at the Raynham-Taunton Greyhound Park off Route 138. The site is proposed for future TOD and will serve walk-in, bike-in, and drive-in customers. 448 parking spaces are proposed. Access to the parking area and bus drop-off will be from Route 138 through the existing development complex. The access driveway will accommodate two 40-foot buses and 7 drop-off vehicle parking spaces. One center platform with a pedestrian bridge is proposed as well as double-track. Walkways will be installed around the exterior of the parking facilities for future walkway connections. No feeder bus service is proposed at this location.

The existing Stoughton station is located off Route 138 and is proposed for modification to accommodate a second track. The station will be relocated from its present position between Wyman and Porter Streets to a new location south of the Wyman Street at-grade crossing. Two new platforms are proposed adjacent to each track, which will require changes to the existing parking layout. Approximately 185 existing parking spaces will be relocated and loss of 28 spaces is proposed. Approximately 350 spaces will remain undisturbed, for a total of 507 parking



spaces. Driveway access is proposed from Washington Street, Wyman Street, Porter Street and Canton Street. No accommodations for bus riders are proposed. Nine vehicular drop-off spaces are proposed. Two side platforms and a double track are proposed. Sidewalks will be constructed to connect with existing sidewalks allowing pedestrians to use the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing at Wyman Street.

The proposed Taunton –Dean Street Station will be located along Arlington Street near Dean Street (Route 44) adjacent to an historic train station. The City of Taunton has begun brownfields remediation of the proposed site in anticipation of the train station. The site is within walking distance of downtown Taunton and is proposed for use as a TOD site and will serve walk-in, walk-in, and drive-in customers. 201 parking spaces are proposed. The driveway access is proposed from Arlington Street and will accommodate two 40-foot buses and 8 vehicle drop-off spaces. One side platform with a single track and freight siding is proposed. Walkways are proposed to connect the platform and access driveway to Arlington Street for future pedestrian connection. The existing Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) Route 7 bus will be re-routed to access the station and Routes 6 and 18 will be rerouted for better transfer access at Taunton Green.

The Whales Tooth station will be located on Acushnet Avenue at the existing Whales Tooth parking lot, constructed by the City in anticipation of the project. The station will include intermodal connections, buses, and potentially ferry services. The site will serve walk-in, bike-in and drive-in customers. 694 parking spaces are proposed. Driveway access is off Acushnet Avenue and the proposed bus drop-off area will accommodate two 40-foot buses and spaces for passenger pick-up and drop-off. One side platform and a single track are proposed. Ramps and stairs will be installed to connect with existing sidewalks adjacent to the parking facility. The SRTA Routes 1, 3 and 11 will be extended to connect with the station and pedestrian connections to the station will be improved.

MassDOT is also planning an expansion at South Station independent of the South Coast Rail project, which involves the addition of seven new tracks (included in the no-build/enhanced bus baseline analysis).

### Layover Facilities

The DEIR/S provided information on five alternative layover sites, including graphics showing wetland resources, preliminary information on tidelands, and potential impacts to environmental justice communities and cultural resources. Conceptual plans for layover facilities have not yet been developed to the same level of detail as those for the stations. As noted in the Scope below, information and analysis should be further developed in the FEIR.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

A draft long-term monitoring and evaluation plan was not presented in the DEIR/S which indicates it will be provided in the FEIR. Further guidance is provided in the Scope below.



Mitigation, Permitting and Section 61 findings

The DEIR/S identifies potential mitigation measures for various impacts including traffic, noise, vibration, visual, and cultural impacts as well as impacts to wetlands and state-listed species. Some specific measures such as noise walls and ballast mats for vibration reduction are proposed as well as more conceptual measures such as a watershed approach to wetlands mitigation. As further detailed in the Scope below, detailed mitigation plans for the preferred alternative are required in the FEIR.

**SCOPE**General

MassDOT should prepare a FEIR in accordance with the general guidance for outline and content found in Section 11.07 of the MEPA regulations as modified by this Scope. The FEIR should include maps, plans and other graphics at a reasonable scale to facilitate review and comment. The FEIR should include a list of permits and approvals required, an update on any changes since the filing of the DEIR/S, and a copy of this Certificate.

L-088.01

Wetlands and Biodiversity

The project will require several variances from the Wetlands regulations performance standards. One of the three criteria for a variance is a demonstration that the variance is necessary to accommodate an overriding public interest. The FEIR should further refine how the proposed Stoughton Electric rail will advance the public interests identified in the DEIR/S, which include: the need for public transportation from the south coast region to Boston and benefits to the south coast region in terms of public transit equity, service distribution and ridership, air quality and climate change improvements, and opportunities for smart growth and sustainable development as an alternative to sprawl.

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To demonstrate eligibility for a variance MassDOT must also propose mitigation measures that will allow the project to be conditioned to contribute to Wetland Protection Act interests. Mitigation measures will be required to off-set the project's direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. The FEIR should describe specific mitigation measures that will directly mitigate wetlands impacts, improve wetland conditions and avoid future indirect and cumulative impacts.

L-088.03

The FEIR should document any revisions to wetland boundaries and project-related impacts based on more detailed field delineations for the proposed Stoughton route, and boundaries as approved by local Conservation Commissions. The FEIR should quantify temporary as well as permanent wetlands impacts, for individual project components and cumulatively for the entire project (including stations and layover facilities). Direct and indirect wetlands impacts related to canopy clearance should be further evaluated in the FEIR. Some tables in the DEIR/S reference total "wetlands" impacts but do not include all resource impacts or temporary impacts. In discussing and summarizing wetlands impacts, the FEIR should clarify

L-088.04



(in table headings for example) whether the reference is to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and ORW only or to the total amount of project-related wetland impacts, and whether it is referring to permanent, temporary or both combined. Where there are differences in categorization under state and federal regulations, the FEIR should clarify and differentiate as appropriate. The FEIR should include a summary table with a breakdown of all wetland resource impacts (including BVW, Bank, Riverfront Area, and BLSF) for the entire project (rail, stations/layovers, roadway improvements, and other components) so that the individual resource impacts and the cumulative totals are summarized in one place. Temporary and indirect impacts should be included in the summary of wetlands impacts, as well as direct and permanent impacts.

L-088.04

The FEIR should include information on the location and volume of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) that will be impacted by the project and details on proposed compensatory flood storage mitigation. The WPA requires that compensatory storage be provided at or near the points of impact. MassDEP has indicated that flexibility exists to consolidate mitigation for some resource impacts into more centralized areas within the watershed rather than individual mitigation sites at each mitigation location. But this approach does not necessarily apply to BLSF. The FEIR should include detailed plans for BLSF mitigation and demonstrate how proposed mitigation will meet WPA requirements. The FEIR should quantify the total area of Riverfront Area impacted by the project, provide a breakdown of impacts at specific locations, describe how work proposed in riverfront will meet applicable performance standards, and provide details of mitigation plans for riverfront impacts.

L-088.05

The DEIR/S indicates that vernal pool impact assessment is based on data from surveys within 100 feet of the center of the ROW. As discussed at meetings of the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG), vernal pools within 100 feet of the edge of the limit of work should be included in the assessment of impacts as well as vernal pools further away from the ROW. The ICG agreed (meeting minutes 4/16/2009) that the direct impacts will include loss of upland habitat where the limit of work is either 600/750 from a vernal pool (biodiversity impacts); potential impacts to vernal pool habitat if the limit of work is within 100 feet of the edge of the vernal pool wetland; and impacts to vernal pools if the work is within a wetland containing a vernal pool. The FEIR should update the vernal pool impact assessment for the Stoughton route to clarify vernal pool and vernal pool habitat impacts, as agreed by ICG, and to inform the proposed mitigation plan. The FEIR should include the results of additional field work or other data gathering needed to complete the assessment. MassDOT should consult with the NHESP about survey methods prior to initiating additional vernal pool surveys. The FEIR should describe how impacts to vernal pools and vernal pool habitat will be avoided, minimized, or mitigated, and include detailed mitigation plans to compensate for adverse impacts. The FEIR should also discuss potential measures to eliminate existing All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) impacts on vernal pools. The FEIR should include a draft Vegetation Management Plan and identify no-spray zones for protection of rare species and other wildlife.

L-088.06

The FEIR should expand upon the analysis of wetlands functions and values in the DEIR/S to include a more detailed analysis for the proposed Stoughton rail. The FEIR should include narrative descriptions of wetlands functions and values of each wetland impacted directly and indirectly by the proposed project. The mitigation plan should describe how the lost functions and values will be mitigated.

L-088.07



The FEIR should include a detailed evaluation of potential mitigation measures to improve habitat connectivity by methods such as wildlife passage structures through the rail bed and improvements to stream crossings to facilitate passage of fish and wildlife designed so as not to compromise the hydrology of wetlands on either side of the rail bed. Potential rail bed modifications should be evaluated using the CAPS methodology to determine those potential modifications that would result in the most improvement in connectivity and wetland condition. The evaluation of opportunities for connectivity improvement measures should be conducted along the entire rail alignment. The FEIR should evaluate opportunities to enhance wetlands near the Raynham Dog Track on the west side of the alignment as well as potential “undevelopment” and restoration of portions of the dog track site. The FEIR should identify measures that MassDOT is committed to implement.

L-088.08

Additional Scope requirements related to stream crossings, trestle design and mitigation are outlined below. The analysis and design plans required should be at a sufficient level of detail to allow permitting agencies and other reviewers to fully understand the type and extent of environmental impacts, and to provide sufficient information for the detailed mitigation plan that will be included in the FEIR. If some of the information cannot be provided in the FEIR due to the level of design detail required, MassDOT should explain why this is the case, include a schedule for development of the information, and MassDOT’s best estimate of project impacts based on the information and analysis prepared for the FEIR. MassDOT should consult with the Interagency Coordinating Group during FEIR preparation to discuss any aspects of the required analysis for which information may not be complete, and to obtain input from the group on the appropriate level of detail to include in the FEIR.

L-088.09

### *Stream Crossings*

The FEIR should include details on the existing conditions at stream crossings, explain where culverts will be replaced or modified. The FEIR should include designs for proposed culverts, bridges, or other alterations at stream crossings and evaluate potential direct and indirect hydrological changes, including those that may impact adjoining wetlands. Any new culverts should be designed so as not to compromise the hydrology of wetlands on either side of the crossing. The analysis should address all stream crossings where work is proposed, including the Southern Triangle. Mitigation should be proposed for any unavoidable impacts. The FEIR should include detailed plans for the proposed relocation of the stream that runs along the former railroad berm near the Raynham Dog Track. The FEIR should assess the environmental impacts and benefits of the proposed relocation, including identification of any additional wetlands impacts associated with stream relocation within the Hockomock Swamp or potential Article 97 land impacts.

L-088.10

The FEIR should identify the locations for proposed culvert replacement and for new culverts and discuss in detail the proposed project’s consistency with Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards. As noted in MassDEP’s comment letter, compliance with Stream Crossing Standards is fully required for new culverts reviewed pursuant to the WPA and 401 regulations. The FEIR analysis should include an evaluation of culvert extension impacts to fish, amphibians, reptiles, and other wildlife passage. The FEIR should evaluate opportunities for

L-088.11



maximizing hydrological connections between wetlands for enhancement and restoration as well as for flood capacity. L-088.11

The FEIR should include an analysis of spans and open bottom arches to meet the Stream Crossing Standards, and consider such arches as mitigation measures throughout the entire rail alignment to the extent they are practicable to improve fish and wildlife passage, and do not interfere with safe train operations. Any closed bottom arch design should include an analysis of measures to install and maintain the stone that requires embedding at a depth of at least two feet. I refer MassDOT to the comments from MassDEP for additional guidance on stream crossing design. L-088.12

#### *Trestle Design and ROW Access*

The FEIR should evaluate the engineering feasibility of constructing the proposed trestle in wetland soils and evaluate the feasibility of constructing a trestle through the Pine Swamp also. The FEIR should also discuss how access will be achieved for any maintenance or emergency situation along portions of the rail ROW, including sections of the rail located in the Hockomock and Pine Swamps. L-088.13

#### *Mitigation*

The FEIR should identify targeted lands for acquisition by MassDOT as mitigation for the cumulative and indirect impacts of the project. The analysis of secondary impacts and smart growth measures in the DEIR/S concludes that aggressive implementation of smart growth can reduce habitat impacts by almost 50 percent compared to the build without mitigation scenario. Cumulative and indirect impacts of the project are estimated at 250 acres of habitat loss that includes loss of high quality wetlands, rare species habitat, and biodiversity. A variance from the WPA regulations is required for the project's impacts to rare species. One concrete way for MassDOT to translate its smart growth planning into resource protection is to fund for conservation-protected targeted acquisition of parcels in Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) that are important to meet the long-term net benefit to rare species and preserve land with a high Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI). The CAPS analysis should be applied to potential mitigation sites to determine IEI scores. The selection of high IEI properties should consider properties that will not be adversely affected by direct or indirect impacts of the project, which would reduce IEI scores after construction. The FEIR should identify targeted sites for acquisition and describe in detail how the proposed land acquisition will offset direct and indirect impacts of the project, and further the smart growth aspects of the Corridor Plan. L-088.14

Implementation of the smart growth Corridor Plan has the potential to mitigate environmental impacts and advance environmental preservation along the project corridor. The Corridor Plan presents an opportunity for an integrated approach to advance environmental protection strategies with land use planning that 1) optimizes economic and housing development, 2) contains sprawl, and 3) protects the integrity of critical natural resource habitats. The FEIR should include an analysis of how land acquisition can be optimized to accomplish these three goals. MassDOT should consult with EEA agencies to identify and protect areas critical to preserving the integrity of existing and valuable ecosystems. MassDOT should also L-088.15



partner with local Conservation Commissions and Planning Boards, regional planning agencies, and non-profit land trust/conservation organizations in a coordinated effort to adopt land preservation strategies that will stem wetland habitat fragmentation commonly associated with sprawl due to unconstrained development. The FEIR should clearly identify MassDOT's commitments to acquire land that meets the project's mitigation requirements and longer-term smart growth goals.

L-088.15

The FEIR mitigation plan should include the following:

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- a 2:1 ratio for BVW mitigation (at a minimum), at least 1:1 for all other wetlands. Where the Corps requires higher ratios (e.g. for forested wetlands), the mitigation plan should reflect the federal requirements also;
- at least a 2:1 mitigation of rare species impacts subject to consultation with NHESP. In some areas mitigation requirements may be considerably higher—because this is a linear project that results in habitat fragmentation and may have disproportionate impacts on some species.
- specific locations and design details for wildlife crossings;
- an evaluation of the feasibility of removing targeted portions of the existing rail bed that will not be used for the new rail line and evaluation of potential ecological benefits of railbed modification using the CAPS analysis. The mitigation plan should include a proposal for removal of portions that can be performed without adversely affecting adjacent wetland resources, including sensitive wetlands on either side of the berm. Mitigation plans should focus specifically on locations that would improve wildlife habitat and fish passage, increase connectivity, and reduce fragmentation (for example, at locations within the Hockomock Swamp where a trestle will replace the existing bed);
- an evaluation of potential for restoration/preservation of Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) wetlands
- topographic information and proposed improvements to existing stream crossings at site-specific locations to improve wildlife and fish passage;
- meaningful Riverfront Area improvements and/or restoration to mitigate for riverfront impacts;
- on-site elevation-specific compensatory storage for lost flood storage, or if such compensatory storage cannot be provided, demonstrate an insignificant increase in flooding, demonstrate that any incremental increase in flooding could be contained on the Proponent's property, or acquire flood easements;
- Acquisition of land to meet the goals of advancing smart growth, providing long-term net benefit to rare species, and preserving high IEI land;
- Commitment to specific actions to implement the Corridor Plan and to work with communities to implement smart growth; and
- Wetland restoration within the Hockomock ACEC.

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The FEIR should document with a high level of assurance that land identified for preservation, restriction, or replication/restoration to be taken by eminent domain can actually be acquired and will satisfy mitigation goals. As part of the assurances, additional mitigation areas should be identified as fall-back options in the event the primary mitigation goals are not achieved.

L-088.28



MassDOT should consult with the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) for input on a draft mitigation plan including the methodology to identify appropriate mitigation for fragmentation impacts and the analysis of mitigation opportunities in the context of fulfilling mitigation objectives. MassDOT should expand its outreach efforts during FEIR preparation to obtain public input on draft mitigation plans. L-088.82

The draft mitigation plan presented in the FEIR should clearly identify the impacts to be mitigated, for example specific resources, functions and values, amounts and types of impacts etc. The plan should describe specific mitigation objectives and include an evaluation of mitigation options to determine which sites and mitigation measures perform best overall in terms of fulfilling mitigation objectives. L-088.29

### Endangered Species

MassDOT should consult with NHESP about the methodology to be used prior to any additional habitat analysis and to discuss metrics to be used in the FEIR for assessing impacts to state listed species and their habitat. MassDOT should also consult with NHESP regarding the assumptions related to vegetation cover that were used in the DEIR/S (Table 4.15-9). The analysis of impacts for the Stoughton route should be revised in the FEIR to reflect the full range of vegetation cover types that each state-listed species requires, as recommended by NHESP. L-088.30

The FEIR should include a detailed quantification of impacts to state-listed species, vernal pool habitat, general wildlife, and state-owned open space, and a detailed plan for minimization and mitigation of impacts. The FEIR should include a comprehensive description of how MassDOT proposes to meet MESA regulatory requirements, including the standards for authorizing a take of a state-listed species through a Conservation and Management Permit. The FEIR should include detailed descriptions and discussion of rare species and wildlife crossing and barrier design (for example, culverts and bridges) as well as other minimization measures, such as construction management to minimize turtle and salamander mortality. The FEIR should explain in detail how the project will meet the long-term "net benefit" standard in 321 CMR 10.23 including detailed mitigation plans that should be developed in consultation with NHESP. These mitigation plans should be at a very specific level of detail to demonstrate clearly that appropriate and effective mitigation will be implemented. The FEIR should also include a detailed plan for mitigation of vernal pool impacts, general wildlife impacts, and impacts to state-owned open space. L-088.31

The DEIR/S indicates there would be no impacts to species migration in areas of existing rail lines. However, the FEIR should include an evaluation of any potential impacts to migration associated with widening of the existing tracks and ROW. L-088.32

### Fisheries

The DEIR/S identifies 34 river and stream crossings on the New Bedford main line and the Fall River Secondary, and 64 on the Stoughton line (on the abandoned railroad ROW). I refer MassDOT to NEHSP's comment letter which includes a list of species and fisheries survey results for rivers and streams in the project area. The FEIR should evaluate potential impacts of L-088.33



the proposed project to fishery resources, considering issues such as water quality, flow changes in siltation, water level fluctuations, loss of riparian habitat and alterations of the temperature regime. As noted in NHESP's letter, stocked trout waters are highly susceptible to changes in water quality and/or quantity. The FEIR should explain how the project will be designed to avoid any adverse impacts to streams and rivers that support stocked trout. The FEIR should describe Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will be implemented for erosion and sedimentation control and propose time of year restrictions as appropriate to avoid and minimize impacts.

L-088.33

The Division of Marine Fisheries included a list of Time of Year (TOY) restrictions for specific species in rivers and streams affected by the project. These restrictions are based on the recently released recommended TOY restrictions for coastal alteration projects to protect marine fisheries resources in Massachusetts. The FEIR should clarify commitments to TOY restrictions or demonstrate that they may not be required if construction is located outside the area used by diadromous species or uses methods that will not affect fish passage or use of spawning riffles. MassDOT should consult with the Division of Marine Fisheries to obtain the new maps of fish passage and spawning locations that are under development.

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#### Biodiversity

In addition to the biodiversity analysis required above relating to wetlands, endangered species, and fisheries, the FEIR should include the results of breeding bird surveys and other studies conducted to refine the wildlife impact assessment and mitigation plans. The mitigation plan should include time of year (toy) restrictions to protect migratory birds, which are protected under the National Migratory Bird Treaty.

L-088.35

The FEIR should include a summary of the CAPS analysis of ecological integrity impacts associated with the proposed project and the results of additional analysis on the potential improvements in the Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI) as a result of proposed mitigation measures. The mitigation plans should describe MassDOT's commitments to specific enhancements in the Hockomock Swamp and other areas along the rail alignment, as well as commitments to biodiversity protection through land acquisition and conservation.

L-088.36

#### Open Space and Conservation Lands

##### *Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA)*

The proposed Stoughton route uses an inactive railroad Right-of-Way that crosses through the Hockomock Swamp WMA. The FEIR should include a detailed analysis of the project's potential impacts to open space within the Hockomock Swamp, including any impacts relating to infrastructure, such as access roads, for construction or ongoing maintenance of the trestle and railbed ROW. The FEIR should include a detailed plan to avoid and minimize impacts and/or to mitigate unavoidable impacts to open space. The FEIR should clarify whether proposed work falls within the existing ROW or to what degree it will extend beyond it.

L-088.37



*Taunton Wild and Scenic River*

The FEIR should include an update on consultations with the National Park Service regarding the status of Taunton River as a National Wild and Scenic River, and to discuss issues relating to water quality impacts from construction and stormwater runoff, rail line crossings of the Taunton and its tributaries, impacts to natural and cultural landscape features, selection and siting of layover facilities, and construction of the Fall River Depot station. The FEIR should describe impacts to Riverfront Area from the proposed layover facility in Fall River and discuss other possible sites outside of Riverfront Area as recommended by the Department of Interior in its comment letter.

L-088.38

*Acushnet Cedar Swamp National Natural Landmark*

The FEIR should describe proposed measures to avoid and minimize construction and train operational noise impacts during critical wildlife breeding season in spring and early summer. The FEIR should also assess barrier effects to wildlife movement in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp and propose scheduling and/or other measures to minimize impacts to wildlife movement during project construction and operation.

L-088.39

The FEIR should evaluate the potential for a hydrological connection between the Acushnet Cedar Swamp and the Church Street Layover facility site. The FEIR should clarify whether or not there is a connection, discuss the potential for runoff impacts to the Swamp, and describe proposed mitigation measures.

L-088.40

*Article 97 and other Open Space*

The open space impact estimates presented in the DEIR/S summary tables are limited to Article 97 land and are not representative of the full range of potential impacts to open space. The FEIR should quantify all open space impacted by the project and describe mitigation commitments. The FEIR should expand upon the evaluation in the DEIR/S to demonstrate consistency with the EEA Article 97 Land Disposition Policy. MassDOT should consult with the Department of Conservation and Recreation during FEIR preparation to discuss policy requirements and a land disposition agreement.

L-088.41

Layover Facilities

The FEIR should expand on the analysis of the proposed layover facilities with detailed plans for the layover facilities and a comparative analysis of environmental impacts with a summary table showing land alteration, impervious area, wetland and water quality impacts, traffic impacts, air quality, noise and vibration, impacts to conservation lands/open space, and impacts to Environmental Justice populations. The alternatives analysis should include consideration of potential sites outside of Riverfront Area. The FEIR should identify permits required for layover facilities and document how the proposed facilities will comply with applicable regulatory requirements. Consistency with Chapter 91 licensing requirements and requirements for location within a Designated Port Area (DPA) should be described as applicable. The FEIR should clarify whether any facility located in a DPA can be allowed as a

L-088.42



temporary and/or supporting DPA use. The FEIR should clarify, and depict on figures/plans, any filled or flowed tidelands on or near the proposed layover facilities. Where applicable, information to support a Public Benefit Determination should be included. L-088.42

Proposed layover facilities contain resource areas including scrub shrub swamp and wooded swamp. The DEIR/S information should be supplemented with additional details on wetlands protection and stormwater management for the proposed sites. The FEIR should describe MassDOT's commitment to measures that will avoid and minimize impacts and/or mitigate for any unavoidable impacts. The FEIR should include a rationale for selection of the preferred layover facilities and for elimination of others from further consideration. The evaluation of impacts associated with layovers should include potential conflicts and synergies with existing and future land use on and in the vicinity of the sites. L-088.43

The DEIR/S indicates that the Weavers Cove East layover facility in New Bedford would substantially affect the visual environment for nearby residents and passers-by on the Taunton River. Similarly, the ISP layover facility would substantially impact the visual environment at its location, which is approximately six miles from the southern terminus of the Fall River Secondary line. The FEIR should include clear commitments to specific measures to minimize or mitigate visual impacts associated with proposed layover facilities. L-088.44

#### Station sites and Transit-Oriented Design (TOD)

The FEIR should describe MassDOT's work with the City of New Bedford to develop a feeder bus system and discuss the additional benefits of the system including potential increases in ridership of the proposed South Coast Rail. The FEIR should also clarify the enhanced bus measures assumed as part of the No-Build scenario, which will be incorporated as part of the project. Several of the station designs do not include accommodations for feeder bus. The FEIR should explain this and consider measures to enhance shuttle/feeder bus service to the proposed stations. L-088.45

The FEIR should include additional information on station sites, including analysis of decked parking, Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD), and opportunities for greenhouse gas reductions as required by other sections of this Scope. The FEIR should include updated design plans for station sites with additional information on proposed Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The DEIR/S indicates that Battleship Cove Station would not operate year-round. The FEIR should clarify the operating schedule for this station. L-088.46

The FEIR should include an update on the new 2010 Journey to Work (JTW) data and include a sensitivity analysis based on comparison of the more recent data with the 2000 data used for the ridership analysis. The FEIR should update the ridership estimates as applicable to account for any significant changes in JTW trends. L-088.47

The FEIR should include additional detail on plans to support pedestrian and bicycle access. I refer the Proponent to comment letters from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), WalkBoston, and other commenters for their recommendations. L-088.48



Some of the station designs include additional siding for freight traffic. The FEIR should clarify whether freight currently exists at these sites or not, and if there are any changes to existing freight routes as a result of the proposed project. L-088.49

#### Stormwater

The FEIR should describe how the project will comply with the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards for work proposed in wetland resource areas and buffer zones pursuant to 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6), as well as other state and federal requirements (including Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements) for stormwater discharges to existing outfalls and/or for the proposed layover facilities. The FEIR should describe measures to ensure that stormwater discharges to the Neponset River will meet the TMDL pathogen removal requirements and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) removal requirements L-088.50

The FEIR should include an assessment of the ability of the proposed project to meet the ten Massachusetts Stormwater Standards or specify if a variance to the standards specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6) may be required. For those components of the project where complete raze of existing development is proposed, MassDOT should be fully meeting the Stormwater Standards rather than only "to the extent possible" as few constraints existing in such situations. L-088.51

The FEIR should include a detailed evaluation of Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) and Low Impact Development (LID) practices to manage stormwater at proposed stations and parking areas, and layover facilities. The FEIR should identify the design capacity for parking at each station. Deck parking should be evaluated as an alternative to at-grade parking to minimize the project's impervious footprint and reduce the amount of land taking required. The ESSD and LID alternatives analysis in the FEIR should also include evaluation of smaller parking stalls and circulation lanes; porous pavement; pavement disconnection versus traditional curb and gutter drainage; retention of existing mature non-invasive plants; exfiltrating bioretention in place of raised traffic islands; and tree box filters. The FEIR should clearly identify the ESSD and LID measures to which the Proponent is committed to implement. For those measures not being committed to, the FEIR should include a sound rationale as to why they are not feasible. L-088.52

The FEIR should include information on stormwater peak runoff rates and whether attenuation requirements will be met. The FEIR should assess each station and layover site to determine if there is sufficient land available for attenuation structures or if any additional right-of-way purchase would be required. For those stations being upgraded, the FEIR should include an analysis and description of measures to meet stormwater standards to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) and to improve existing conditions. The FEIR should include an analysis of potential stormwater impacts to critical areas including vernal pools, and how these impacts will be addressed. L-088.53

The FEIR should include details on proposed stormwater management along the proposed rail tracks. As noted in MassDEP's comment letter, the Greenbush rail line included an extensive drainage system. The FEIR should describe the proposed drainage design for the L-088.54



Stoughton rail line and demonstrate that sufficient treatment will be provided prior to any discharge of track drainage runoff to resource areas. The FEIR should include a detailed description of the proposed stormwater management system for all components of the project. I refer MassDOT to additional guidance regarding stormwater management in MassDEP's comment letter.

L-088.54

#### Coastal Zone

The proposed Whale's Tooth Station in New Bedford is located within the coastal zone. The FEIR should include measures to avoid and minimize non-point source pollution from idling trains and should describe how the station site will be designed to be compatible with existing industrial uses in the New Bedford/Fairhaven Designated Port Area (DPA). The Wamsutta layover alternative is located adjacent to the Whales' Tooth Station site and the DPA. The FEIR should address compatibility issues with regard to coastal zone protection and DPA uses as recommended by CZM.

L-088.55

The proposed stations in Fall River are located near the Mount Hope Bay DPA and the Fall River station is partially located within the coastal zone. The proposed Fall River layover sites are located within the coastal zone. In consideration of future sea level rise, the FEIR should consider a margin of safety to avoid a facility being located in a future elevated Zone A floodplain. The FEIR should address pollution prevention and LID at all station and layover sites as well as project consistency with DPA uses and the Fall River City's harbor planning goals for pedestrian reconnection to the Waterfront. The FEIR should also address nitrogen deposition in coastal embayments more explicitly, as requested by CZM in its comment letter.

L-088.56

#### Chapter 91 Licensing and Public Benefits Determination

MassDOT should consult with MassDEP and provide more detailed plans to determine whether or not the filled tidelands at Fall River Battleship Cove Station, New Bedford Whale's Tooth Station, and Wamsutta Layover facility are considered landlocked tidelands as defined at 301 CMR 9.02. The FEIR should include analysis and mitigation as applicable to support a Public Benefits Determination consistent with Chapter 168 of the Acts of 2007. The FEIR should describe any public access restrictions to the shoreline that may result from construction of layover facilities or other components of the proposed project. Mitigation plans should be included in the FEIR to compensate for any public access impacts.

L-088.57

A Mandatory Public Benefits Determination is required if the project is completely or partially located in tidelands or landlocked tidelands. The FEIR should include detailed information describing the nature of the tidelands affected and the public benefits of the proposed project in accordance with the Public Benefits Determination requirements at 301 CMR 13.00.

L-088.58

MassDEP indicates in its comment letter that the layover facilities at Weavers Cove and the ISP off North Main Street are located on filled tidelands. MassDEP has established the presumptive line of jurisdiction. MassDOT, if intending to rebut this presumption, should consult with MassDEP prior to submission of an FEIR and provide MassDEP with the

L-088.59



information outlined in its comment letter. The FEIR should include an update on consultations and jurisdictional determinations.

L-088.59

The FEIR should identify and describe all components of the project requiring Chapter 91 licensing and whether project components are considered water-dependent or non-water dependent. The FEIR should describe in detail how the project will meet licensing standards at 310 CMR 9.54 and 9.55 (for non water-dependent) and 301 CMR 9.31 – 9.40 (for water dependent). The FEIR should explain how the project is consistent with the New Bedford and Fall River Municipal Harbor Plans pursuant to 310 CMR 9.34, including for example, how intermodal connection to the ferry service would be achieved. The FEIR should explain how railroad components subject to licensing will preserve or enhance navigational capacity and maintain or enhance public access pursuant to 310 CMR 9.35 and 9.36. If navigation or public access is impacted by the project, the FEIR should include detailed mitigation plans. The FEIR should explore opportunities on or near the layover facilities where MassDOT can “take reasonable measures to provide open space for active or passive recreation at the water’s edge” pursuant to 310 CMR 9.55(2).

L-088.60

#### Air Quality and Climate

The FEIR should include an evaluation of alternative fuels for the Enhanced Bus and feeder bus services and commit to use of hybrid and/or other fuels to minimize emission of air pollutants to the maximum extent feasible.

L-088.61

The Stoughton Electric alternative, as noted in the DEIR/S review above, is the preferred alternative and provides the best overall emission reductions for VOC, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> in comparison to the other alternatives evaluated. The commitments to construction-related mitigation measures should be reiterated in the FEIR as part of comprehensive mitigation plan.

L-088.62

#### *GHG and Climate Change*

The DEIR/S did not include an analysis of stationary source GHG emissions and mitigation indicating that there would be no buildings at the stations, only platforms. However, there are other ways in which MassDOT can achieve GHG reductions, for example by using energy efficient interior and exterior parking lot lighting and use of solar photovoltaic energy. The DEIR/S indicates that the MBTA will explore renewable energy technologies at station sites; this should be evaluated in the FEIR/S. The FEIR should identify design and operational features that MassDOT will commit to implementing in order to reduce GHG emissions, including measures to promote reduction of GHG emissions associated with TOD facilities and other induced growth. MassDOT should consult with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Division of Green Communities during preparation of the FEIR for assistance in developing a joint approach to promote energy efficiency and GHG reduction in the south coast rail communities. DOER has also recommended that MassDOT consult with utility companies to explore ways that communities can avail themselves of incentives that could be used to mitigate GHG emissions related to induced growth. The FEIR should include an update on consultations and an outline of the proposed mitigation plan.

L-088.63



The project overall is expected to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and GHG reductions are expected as a result of emission rules for mobile sources and the proposed smart growth plan. As indicated in the DEIR/S, the transportation model is being updated to reflect the reallocation of induced jobs into different transportation zones for future impact analyses of induced jobs in the context of traffic and GHG emissions. The FEIR should include the results of analysis of induced growth impacts on traffic and air quality. The FEIR should describe in detail specific commitments that MassDOT will make to contribute towards VMT and related GHG reductions through the proposed feeder bus system. The FEIR should provide more detailed information on a proposed feeder/shuttle bus network with frequent and convenient local bus linkages that will enhance local and intra-regional access to the proposed stations. MassDOT should work in cooperation with the regional transit authorities to further develop this plan. The feeder bus system should accommodate riders with bikes and the stations should provide adequate bicycle racks and storage and provide space and support for other programs that allow train riders to pick up bikes at one location and drop them off elsewhere. MassDOT should design this project as a flagship for implementation of its GreenDOT program.

L-088.64

#### Noise and Vibration

The FEIR should include a detailed evaluation of those locations that will experience moderate and severe noise impacts as a result of the project and commitments to specific mitigation measures. The evaluation should address noise impacts relating to all aspects of the project including train operations and horn noise, and noise associated with stations and layover facilities.

L-088.65

The DEIR/S indicates that mitigation will be provided for severe impacts where it is cost-effective. The Proponent is required to mitigate for noise-related impacts and the cost-effectiveness limitation may be problematic, as is the proposed lack of mitigation for moderate impacts. MassDOT should consult with MassDEP and the Interagency Coordinating Group for guidance on development of the noise mitigation plan. The FEIR should include a detailed mitigation plan with commitments to an appropriate level of mitigation for project-related noise impacts. The FEIR should document how the project will comply with MassDEP air quality regulations and Noise Policy.

L-088.66

The DEIR/S compares vibration impacts experienced by receptors against the 80 VdB FTA criteria for human annoyance. The FEIR should compare the estimated vibration levels to existing conditions and describe the actual change that will be experienced. This additional information should be provided for residential impacts along the Stoughton route as well as for historic buildings. The DEIR/S discusses possible mitigation measures. The FEIR should include a mitigation plan with clear and specific commitments to address vibration impacts and an explanation of the reductions in VdB levels expected.

L-088.67

#### Environmental Justice

The FEIR should include a list of specific mitigation commitments to address noise and vibration impacts to Environmental Justice neighborhoods. The FEIR should also include an update on the investigation of potential adverse effects on any traditional cultural properties of

L-088.68



significance to Native American Tribes. The FEIR should clarify if there will be a disproportionate adverse impact to an Environmental Justice community with regard to traditional cultural properties, and if so, what mitigation will be implemented.

L-088.68

The DEIR/S projects potential financial impacts to Environmental Justice communities in Fall River as a result of property acquisition. The FEIR should specify how such impacts will be mitigated as part of the project. The DEIR/S also acknowledges that Environmental Justice communities may be negatively affected by increased property values in their neighborhood as a result of the South Coast Rail project. The FEIR should include further discussion and specific commitments on how this will be addressed (for example, through clear commitments to affordable housing as part of the project's station TOD plans, or other measures).

L-088.69

MassDOT should continue its outreach program during FEIR preparation and encourage the participation of those Environmental Justice neighborhoods and residences specifically affected by the proposed project. The FEIR should include an update on MassDOT's outreach efforts to Environmental Justice populations.

L-088.70

#### Cultural Resources

The FEIR should include an update on historical and archaeological studies conducted since the DEIR/S and an update on consultations with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and local historic board and societies. The figures in the FEIR should show locations of historic architectural resources in the context of the project and its Area of Potential Effect. The FEIR should address potential conflicts with proposed station parking at the site of the historic H.H. Richardson train station in Easton and address local concerns relating to visual and cultural resource impacts. The FEIR should evaluate mitigation opportunities, including repairs and rehabilitation, for the historic train station in Stoughton.

L-088.71

The FEIR should expand on the analysis provided in the DEIR/S with a detailed mitigation plan for impacts to significant historical and archaeological resources. The FEIR should include an update on consultations with Native American Tribes and describe potential impacts to properties of significance to the tribes. The FEIR should include commitments to specific mitigation measures for any significant cultural impacts.

L-088.72

#### Traffic and Public Safety

Many commenters expressed concerns regarding the proposed at-grade crossings for the rail line and the potential for increased accidents. The FEIR should evaluate the potential for increases in accident rates as a result of proposed crossings and identify specific measures, and the effectiveness of such measures, to protect public safety to the maximum extent feasible. The FEIR should evaluate potential safety impacts in the context of EEA's Environmental Justice Policy. Traffic congestion and potential delays in emergency services were also raised as concerns in the comment letters received, as were construction-related impacts to existing rail services. The FEIR should respond to these comments and include details of any mitigation proposed. The traffic mitigation plans in the DEIR/S should be revised as necessary based on further analysis for the Stoughton Electric alternative and included in the FEIR.

L-088.73



South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan

L-088.74

The DEIR/S should include an update on the status of implementation of the Corridor Plan and explain how it will be implemented in parallel with the proposed rail and station development to ensure appropriate timing of mitigation and to optimize the smart growth potential of the project.

Long-Term Smart Growth Evaluation and Environmental Stewardship Plan

L-088.75

MassDOT should consult with the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) and set up a workgroup in conjunction with the ICG to develop the methodology and process for this component of the FEIR. MassDOT should explore existing models and performance metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of smart growth plans and environmental protection strategies, and include a summary in the FEIR of experience from other regions that may be useful to apply in the case of this project. MassDOT should work with EEA, ICG, regional planning agencies, and local communities, to develop evaluation indicators and metrics tailored to the South Coast Rail project. The evaluation plan should include a monitoring component to assess the accuracy of impact projections and allow for mid-course corrections and adaptive strategies as needed. The FEIR should propose a mechanism for periodic reporting out to the public and other agencies on MassDOT's progress in achieving the smart growth and environmental goals of the project, including its commitments to protection of ecologically significant habitat.

The DEIR/S describes anticipated smart growth and environmental benefits of the proposed project. MassDOT should describe in the FEIR how potential impacts and benefits will be monitored and measured. Metrics to consider for the Smart Growth Evaluation and Environmental Stewardship Plan include spatial metrics based on data that can be integrated with GIS mapping to compare 2020, 2025, and 2030 conditions against the baseline and Build without smart growth (business as usual scenarios) to evaluate benefits in reducing sprawl and to identify areas for improvement. Other smart growth metrics to consider include: the percentage of new development acreage located in PDAs; the percentage of PPAs left undeveloped and permanently protected; the number of developments meeting TOD, LEED, neighborhood design or EESD standards; increasing shift of commuters from automobile to transit (riders and VTM reductions); change in IEI value of impacted areas and mitigation sites; the amount of land subject to transfer of development rights (TDR); and GHG emission reduction achievements of facilities in TOD areas. Implementation of the South Coast Rail Economic and Land Use Corridor Plan is expected to achieve various socio-economic benefits that could be monitored over time to evaluate the effectiveness of plan implementation. For example, the DEIR/S discusses environmental justice communities and related transit equity citing benefits the project will provide in terms of access to jobs, education and other services. The long-term evaluation plan should include metrics to evaluate how effective the project is in furthering social equity and environmental justice within the south coast communities.

L-088.76

Mitigation and Section 61 Findings

L-088.77

The FEIR should expand upon the smart growth implementation plan as outlined above. The FEIR should include details on the proposed measures, roles and responsibilities, and



MassDOT's commitments to implement specific measures to promote smart growth and achieve the mitigation and environmental benefits described in the DEIR/S. The FEIR should discuss the mitigation planning and outreach process conducted during FEIR preparation.

The FEIR should include revised Section 61 Findings for all state agency permits that reflect the detailed mitigation commitments to be provided in the FEIR. GHG commitments and related self-certification language should be included in the draft Section 61 Findings for MassDEP permitting.

L-088.78

The FEIR should include a separate chapter on mitigation measures, which should include a summary table of all mitigation commitments as well as the revised Section 61 Findings. The Section 61 Findings should describe proposed mitigation measures, contain clear commitments to mitigation and a schedule for implementation, and identify parties responsible for funding and implementing the mitigation measures. The draft Section 61 Findings will serve as the primary template for permit conditions. Final Section 61 Findings will be included with all state permits issued for this project and will include conditions considered binding upon the proponent as mitigation commitments.

L-088.79

#### Responses to Comments

In order to ensure that the issues raised by commenters are addressed, the FEIR should include responses to comments to the extent they are within MEPA jurisdiction. This directive is not intended to, and shall not be construed to, enlarge the scope of the FEIR beyond what has been expressly identified in this Certificate. The FEIR should also include a copy of this Certificate and a copy of each comment letter received on the DEIR/S.

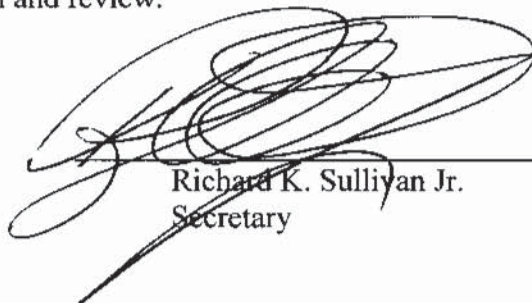
L-088.80

#### Circulation

The FEIR should be circulated in compliance with Section 11.16 of the MEPA regulations and copies should be sent to the list of "comments received" below. A copy of the FEIR should be made available for public review at the Public Libraries in the South Coast region municipalities. I commend MassDOT on its public outreach efforts to date and encourage continued public engagement during FEIR preparation and review.

L-088.81

June 29, 2011



Richard K. Sullivan Jr.  
Secretary



## Comments Received

4/15/11	1. David Slutz
4/26/11	2. Doug Leatham
5/02/11	3. City of New Bedford Assessing Department (Peter S. Barney)
5/02/11	4. Guillermo Gonzales
5/04/11	5. MassAudubon (1 <sup>st</sup> letter - public hearing May 4)
5/05/11	6. Peter L. Paull, Jr.
5/05/11	7. City of Taunton, Office of the Mayor
5/05/11	8. Jean C. Fox
5/06/11	9. Denise Paquette
5/06/11	10. Jim Mathes
5/06/11	11. Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
5/06/11	12. Dr. Candace Heald
5/06/11	13. City of New Bedford Planning Department
5/06/11	14. Massachusetts Historical Commission (copy of letter to the Army Corps)
5/09/11	15. David Chaffin
5/09/11	16. Rosemary Zehntner
5/10/11	17. John Theriault
5/10/11	18. Westport Community Schools
5/10/11	19. Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District
5/10/11	20. Melinda Ailes
5/11/11	21. John K. Bullard
5/11/11	22. Pauline C. Nadeau
5/11/11	23. Representative Shauna O'Connell
5/11/11	24. Representative Robert M. Koczera
5/12/11	25. City of New Bedford Planning Board
5/16/11	26. City of New Bedford Office of the City Clerk
5/17/11	27. Nicole Dion
5/17/11	28. New Bedford Economic Development Council
5/18/11	29. Scott Martin
5/19/11	30. Stephen Castellina
5/23/11	31. Gerald J. McDonald
5/23/11	32. Forrest C. Lindwall
5/23/11	33. City of Fall River Planning Department
5/23/11	34. City of Fall River Conservation Commission
5/23/11	35. Town of Norton Board of Selectmen
5/23/11	36. Robert M. Mendillo
5/23/11	37. Peter Deschenes
5/23/11	38. Patti Linhares
5/23/11	39. Susan K. Plante
5/23/11	40. Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce
5/25/11	41. Weavers Cove Energy LLC
5/25/11	42. Steven P. Davis
5/25/11	43. Antoinette Lopes
5/26/11	44. Linda L. Palmieri



5/26/11	45. Eric M. Stevens
5/26/11	46. Louis F. Gitto
5/26/11	47. Joel N. Weber II
5/26/11	47. Louis F. Gitto
5/26/11	48. David L. Goldrick
5/26/11	49. Paul Fitzpatrick
5/26/11	50. Heather Graf
5/26/11	51. Grant Taylor
5/26/11	52. Representative Elizabeth Poirier (Elaine M. Hyland on behalf of Rep. Poirier)
5/26/11	53. John Malley
5/26/11	54. Senator John F. Kerry, Member of Congress James P. McGovern, and Member of Congress Barney Frank
5/27/11	55. Fall River Office of Economic Development
5/27/11	56. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
5/27/11	57. Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
5/27/11	58. Town of Easton
5/27/11	59. Sue Bass
5/27/11	60. Metropolitan Area Planning Council
5/27/11	61. Representative Antonio Cabral
5/27/11	62. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
5/27/11	63. Taunton River Watershed Alliance
5/27/11	64. Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions
5/27/11	65. MassAudubon (second letter)
5/27/11	66. Town of Stoughton (on behalf of Town from Kopelman and Paige, P.C.)
5/27/11	67. Sierra Club
5/27/11	68. Old Colony Planning Council
5/27/11	69. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
5/27/11	70. Massachusetts River Alliance
5/27/11	71. The Nature Conservancy
5/27/11	72. Norton Conservation Commission
5/27/11	73. Curt Rice
5/27/11	74. Michael Mazucca
5/27/11	75. Eileen J. Marum
5/27/11	76. Heather and Doug Lewis
5/27/11	77. Priscilla Almquist-Olsen
5/27/11	78. Brian Reardon
5/27/11	79. Jennifer Reardon
5/27/11	80. Barbara Anzivino
5/27/11	81. Victoria Taylor
5/27/11	82. Michael Joliffe
5/27/11	83. Donald Michaud
5/27/11	84. Rebecca Turley
5/27/11	85. Town of Raynham, Selectmen and Board of Health
5/27/11	86. Robert Mullen
5/27/11	87. Marianne B. De Souza



5/27/11	88. Leon Litchfield
5/27/11	89. Sergeant Christopher John Barros
5/27/11	90. James Stanton
5/27/11	91. Town of Easton, Office of the Town Administrator
5/27/11	92. Mary Jane Golden
5/27/11	93. Wendy Van Dyke
5/27/11	94. Easton Historical Society
5/27/11	95. Linda Grubb
5/27/11	96. Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
5/27/11	97. The United Regional Chamber of Commerce
5/27/11	98. Elizabeth Acheson
5/27/11	99. Stephen Ford
5/27/11	100. Town of Canton, Office of the Selectmen
5/27/11	101. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
6/01/11	102. Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
6/01/11	103. Lynne E. McSweeney
6/01/11	104. Alan Johnson
6/01/11	105. John Molloy
6/02/11	106. WalkBoston
6/03/11	107. City of Boston
6/13/11	108. Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
5/07/11	109. Paul Cienniwa

RKS/AOS/aos



# State Agencies

<b>Page</b>	<b>Name</b>
1	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
5	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
26	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
33	Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
36	Massachusetts Historical Commission
38	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management





May 27, 2011

**Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.**

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: Aisling O'Shea MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

**Re: EOEEA #14346, South Coast Rail Project**

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation ("DCR" or "Department") is pleased to submit the following comments in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") submitted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation ("DOT") for the South Coast Rail Project (the "Project"). The filing jointly serves as the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for review under the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA").

The DEIR evaluates the following alternatives for the Project:

- A No-Build alternative, that is proposed to provide enhanced bus services;
- Attleboro Alternatives (Diesel and Electric) (the "Attleboro Alternatives")
- Stoughton Alternatives (Diesel and Electric) (the "Stoughton Alternatives")
- Whittenton Alternatives (Diesel and Electric) (the "Whittenton Alternatives")
- A Rapid Bus alternative that would construct a dedicated bus lane within the Route 24 corridor.

The DEIR concludes the Attleboro alternatives are infeasible, due to existing service constraints on the Northeast Corridor and the high costs to make necessary improvements to address these constraints.

DCR submits the following comments for Project alternatives with proposed station stops near DCR properties, and located within Areas of Critical Environmental Concern ("ACEC"). DCR administers the ACEC Program on behalf of EOEEA. DCR is highly supportive of the goals of this project to improve access and mobility to underserved communities of Southeast Massachusetts. Providing efficient rail service will have environmental benefits in air quality, carbon reduction and traffic congestion for this fast growing region. Well-located stations will provide new and improved transportation access to several DCR state parks benefiting communities beyond this region.

L-089.01

### DCR Properties

DCR is pleased to note that the Rapid Bus Alternative has been modified to avoid impacts to the Blue Hills Reservation. Elimination of the Middleboro Alternative has alleviated potential for impacts to Morrissey Boulevard and Furnace Brook Parkway.

L-089.02

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Deval L. Patrick  
Governor

Timothy P. Murray  
Lt. Governor

Richard K. Sullivan Jr., Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Edward M. Lambert Jr., Commissioner  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

Some of the proposed rail corridors and rail stations are located near to DCR properties:

- The New Bedford Main Line forms the eastern boundary of the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation. This state reservation was designated in 1972 by the National Park Service as a National Natural Landmark. The New Bedford Main Line is currently an active freight line, and the addition of passenger service is expected to have no significant adverse effects on the resources of the state reservation. Required track improvements will be an opportunity to positively improve conditions, particularly water quality, through incorporation of storm water Best Management Practices (BMPs.)
- The proposed State Pier Station would be located adjacent to the New Bedford State Fishing Pier, the Freetown Station would be near to Freetown-Fall River State Forest, and the Battleship Cove Station would be adjacent to Fall River Heritage State Park. DCR supports the proposed rail stations, because the locations will provide opportunities to enhance public access to these DCR-managed facilities. DCR would like to coordinate with the proponent and the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to develop public access strategies as the Project design progresses and to avoid through design, conflicts between park access parking needs and commuter parking.

L-089.03

L-089.04

### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

The ACEC Program has participated in the South Coast Rail Interagency Coordinating Group since its inception in 2007. All of the alternatives would have some impacts to the resources of the ACECs. Because the Attleboro Alternatives were deemed infeasible by the Proponent due to service constraints, these comments focus on the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives and the Rapid Bus which pass through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC.

The Hockomock Swamp ACEC was designated by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs for all nine of the inland resource qualifying categories (301 CMR 12.06): fishery habitat, inland wetlands, inland surface waters, water supply areas, natural hazard areas including floodplains, agricultural areas, historical/archaeological resources, habitat resources including rare species, and special use areas including undeveloped or natural areas, public recreational areas, or significant scenic site. Additionally, the Hockomock Swamp has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

### Impacts of Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)

#### *Wetlands and Floodplains*

The DEIR describes wetland impacts approximately 2 acres (1.74 acres permanent and 0.57 acres temporary) within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC. Table 3.3-18 evaluates these impacts against impacts of other alternatives and assigns letter grades. The ACEC Program recommends that letter grades be eliminated as they may underestimate the wetlands impacts in the Hockomock Swamp and recommends that the FEIR focus on further defining the criteria and impacts discussed in the DEIR Biodiversity chapter.

L-089.05

To minimize wetlands impacts and allow for wildlife migration and connectivity between the wetlands currently bisected by the existing berm, a 1.8 mile trestle through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC is proposed for the Stoughton Alternative. Because of its significance as a mitigation feature, the engineering feasibility of the trestle on wetlands soils should be more fully explored in the FEIR.

L-089.06



*Biodiversity*

The ACEC Program believes the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives have high cumulative impact to biodiversity due to their impacts on rare species, Priority Natural Communities (Atlantic White Cedar), and their fragmentation of habitat and wildlife populations. As a complex ecosystem, impacts can be amplified due to the high inter-connectivity of resources and habitats.

As noted above, the Hockomock Swamp has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, that supports neo-tropical migrant songbirds, as well as breeding populations of species particular to forest interiors, thus sensitive to impacts to connectivity. The CAPS (the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System) analysis in (Appendix 4.14.) (UMass Amherst) a GIS-based coarse filter analysis of potential impacts to biodiversity, states that “Overall, the two routes through Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity” (p. 7).

L-089.07

As stated in the DEIR, “although partially mitigated by the Hockomock Swamp Trestle, using this railroad bed would affect the connectivity of adjacent habitats and reduce their overall biodiversity value.” (p. 4.10-64). The DEIR states that constructing the rail bed within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC will require removing the forest canopy over the corridor and “This gap will divide the Hockomock Swamp south of Foundry Street into two units of approximately 3,201 acres west of the rail line and 682 acres east of the rail.” (p. 4.14-84). The DEIR also states that “large forest blocks... to support successfully reproducing populations of area-sensitive forest-interior nesters ... must be over 500 acres. Several studies suggest that 750 to 1,200 acres are necessary, and that even larger areas in excess of 7,500 acres are optimal.” If the Stoughton and/or Whittenton Alternatives are forwarded to the FEIR/FEIS, the ACEC Program requests the Proponent propose any additional methods to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these impacts to biodiversity.

*Water Supply Resources*

The ACEC Program notes that the Hockomock Swamp ACEC was designated in part for the system of interconnected surface and ground waters and the high and medium yield aquifers that supply public drinking water. At the time of designation two public supply wells for the Town of Raynham and one for the Town of West Bridgewater were located within the ACEC, and potential municipal well sites had been identified in the Towns of Bridgewater, Easton, and Raynham. The ACEC Program suggests that further review be included in the FEIR especially for rail intersections with Zone IIs.

L-089.08

Mitigation Needs for Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives

If the Stoughton and/or Whittenton Alternatives are forwarded to the FEIR/FEIS, the ACEC Program offers these comments toward further avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of environmental impacts. Minimization and mitigation suggestions in the DEIR should be more fully developed in the FEIR.

*Wetlands, Stream Crossings, and Flood Storage*

The ACEC Program requests stream crossings and culverts be evaluated against the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards, including maximizing hydrologic connections between wetlands for enhancement and restoration as well as for flood capacity. Climate change calculations should also be incorporated that are consistent with the most current guidelines for DOT and for federal permitting. Riverfront area impacts should be quantified and avoided, minimized or mitigated.

L-089.09

The ACEC Program requests stormwater management plans should use Best Management Practices (“BMPs”) and Low Impact Development (“LID”) to mitigate discharges of potential pollutants and sediments into wetlands within ACECs and hydrological connections to ACECs. | L-089.10

The ACEC Programs requests all permanent wetland impacts should include a preference for mitigation via restoration. | L-089.11

*Raynham Rail Station*

This proposed new station should minimize impervious area to avoid further land alteration in a heavily altered area adjacent to Hockomock Swamp. The Proponent should explore features such as structured parking, and BMPs for stormwater management. | L-089.12

*Secondary Growth Mitigation – “Corridor Plan”*

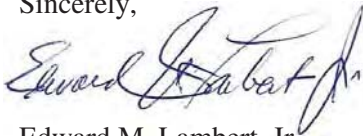
The ACEC Program commends DOT in the production of the Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan (“Corridor Plan”) with locally identified Priority Development Areas (“PDAs”) and Priority Protection Areas (“PPAs”). The ACEC Program supports a targeted implementation program. The FEIR should detail these commitments as part of the mitigation plan as well as a long-term monitoring and evaluation plan to gauge the success of smart growth. | L-089.13

Rapid Bus Alternative

The DEIR states that “The Rapid Bus Alternative is not anticipated to adversely affect biodiversity in the Hockomock Swamp ACEC other than a small loss of habitat immediately adjacent to the existing Route 24.” (p. 4.10-50) The Rapid Bus Alternative would result in approximately 4 acres of permanent wetlands impact and 3.19 acres of temporary wetlands impact within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC along the edges of wetlands already impacted by Route 24. The ACEC Program notes Best Managements Practices (“BMPs”) for stormwater management could minimize any stormwater impacts to ACECs and hydrological connections to them. | L-089.14

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions or need further information regarding the ACEC Program, please contact Liz Sorenson, ACEC Program Director, at [elizabeth.sorenson@state.ma.us](mailto:elizabeth.sorenson@state.ma.us) or 617-626-1394. For coordination regarding enhanced public access to the state forests and parks, please contact Paul Cavanagh at [paul.cavanagh@state.ma.us](mailto:paul.cavanagh@state.ma.us) or 508-866-2580 ext 122.

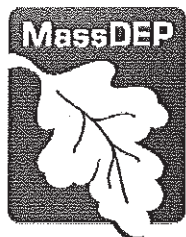
Sincerely,



Edward M. Lambert, Jr.  
Commissioner

cc: Alan R. Anacheke-Nasemann (ACOE)  
Kristina Egan, Wendy Stern (DOT)  
Phil Weinberg, Lealdon Langley, John Felix, Michael Stroman, Jerome Grafe (MassDEP)  
Rich Lehan, Jon Regosin, Jason Zimmer (DFG)  
Steve Smith, Nancy Durfee (SRPEDD)  
Matt Schweisberg, Tim Timmermann, Ed Reiner, Rosemary Monahan (US EPA)  
Niek Veraart, Vice President – The Louis Berger Group, Inc.





Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

## Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

DEVAL L. PATRICK  
Governor

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
Lieutenant Governor

RICHARD K. SULLIVAN JR.  
Secretary

KENNETH L. KIMMELL  
Commissioner

May 27, 2011

Richard Sullivan, Secretary  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office, Aisling O'Shea, EOE No.14346  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, N.E. District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Re: DEIS/DEIS/R for the South Coastal Rail Project  
EEA No: 14346

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann:

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/R or Report) on the South Coastal Rail Project proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

The project envisions the establishment of a public transportation alternative that will link the cities of Fall River and New Bedford to Boston and create regional transit interconnections among the South Coast communities. MassDOT has defined the project's purpose as: "to more fully meet the existing and future demand of public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities." While the US Army Corp of Engineers has narrowed the definition of the project's purpose to meeting its public transportation demand and regional mobility components, MassDEP believes the project's potential to influence more sustainable growth patterns in this expanding region is relevant in considering its potential environmental impact in the context of MEPA review.

L-076.01

The Report examines the existing and future status of the roadways serving the South Coast communities and presents MassDOT's case for the need for the project based on adverse roadway and related air quality conditions, transit mode choice and equity, and implementation of the Commonwealth's transportation policies. The Report documents the growth in traffic volume, 2-3% overall and up to 5% in some communities that has created roadway congestion on the limited set of highways that connect commuters from the southeastern region to downtown Boston and Cambridge. These consistently congested conditions results in a Level of Service rating of F and increased vehicular accidents on the three major highways serving the South Coast. There has been an overall increase in these accidents, injuries and fatalities during the 2004-2006 study period of 7% with some routes showing increases of nearly 30% in accidents or fatalities. Fall River and New Bedford had the first and third highest number of vehicle crashes during this period. As new households continue to be added to the region, the projected growth in commuter trips and vehicle miles travelled (VMT) will exacerbate the existing congestion problems further compromising automobile safety and increasing the emissions of mobile source pollutants that have an adverse impact on air quality and climate change.

The projected growth in VMT and air pollutants in the South Coast is magnified by the lack of commuter rail service and the greater dependence on automobiles and buses in the region as compared to other areas of the Commonwealth currently served by commuter rail. The lack of availability and quality of service in public transit reduces regional access to employment and educational opportunities and medical and cultural facilities, particularly in the large environmental justice population centers of New Bedford and Fall River. Even for those communities within a reasonable distance of other commuter rail stations outside the South Coast, it is projected that the capacity of those bordering systems will be insufficient to meet the anticipated growth in ridership in their service areas. The Report identifies the planned improvements to the existing roadways and rail systems in the South Coast region, but concludes these projects will not address the shortcomings the communities face due to lack of equitable public transit access to Boston.

The principles that underlie the project's purpose of expanding access to quality public transit in an underserved region that contains economically and environmentally disadvantaged communities is consistent with multiple Commonwealth, regional and MassDOT transportation plans and policies. What is significant and commendable in the planning and execution of this project to date is MassDOT's commitment to rigorously examine the indirect growth impacts associated with extension of rail service and to actively and comprehensively foster smart growth strategies designed to ameliorate the potential adverse environmental impacts of sprawl development that could otherwise result. As discussed in further detail herein, the project will stimulate development beyond what would occur under a no-build scenario resulting in the consumption of land with significant environmental value such as wetlands, protected species habitat, open space and water resources and the emission of additional air pollutants.

The Report acknowledges that its projections rely largely on historic trends and the best professional judgment of the planning team MassDOT assembled. While MassDEP does not have the expertise to conduct a detailed critique of the Report's methodology, the model was developed with significant input from regional planning experts. The designation of preferred

L-076.02



development and preservation areas and the model's logic and assumptions appear to be reasonable given the variables in play and the number of communities being examined.

L-076.02

MassDEP also recognizes that whether the difference in outcomes depicted between the business as usual and smart growth scenarios will be realized is largely dependent on decisions made by municipalities and developers over the next two decades. But the Report also references the multiple forms of technical and financial assistance the Commonwealth and MassDOT in particular has expended and appears to be committed to extend to local and regional decision makers that will motivate and facilitate transportation oriented development and the conservation of environmentally valuable areas. MassDEP believes that in evaluating whether the project has taken all feasible measures to avoid or minimize damage to the environment, it is reasonable to look to the continued implementation by MassDOT of smart growth assistance and incentives by memorializing that commitment in the FEIS/R.

L-076.03

### Alternatives

The DEIS/DEIS/R compares the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of five sets of alternatives across the broad range of criteria as scoped in the Secretary's April 2009 Certificate: No Build, Attleboro Electric and Diesel, Stoughton Electric and Diesel, Whittenton Electric and Diesel, and Rapid Bus. All three rail options incorporate the common use of the rail system south of Weir Junction denominated as the Southern Triangle, which includes the New Bedford Main Line and the Fall River Secondary.

The Report concludes that the Attleboro Alternative is impracticable because it fails to meet the MBTA's Service Delivery Policy and the minimum reliability criterion for on-time performance standards. In addition to the relevance of practicability in relation to a MEPA evaluation of whether an alternative meets the project's purpose, the Water Quality Certification regulations, sets the performance standards for the discharge or placement fill in state and federal waters, requires MassDEP to consider practicability in reviewing project alternatives (314 CMR 9.06).

L-076.04

The Service Delivery Policy establishes a standard of three trips in a peak direction during the AM and PM peak periods. The on-time reliability criterion is defined as no more than 5 minutes late. As compared to the system wide reliability performance standard of between 78-95%, the Attleboro electric and diesel Alternatives met the reliability criterion only 54% and 49% of the time. The Network Simulation Analysis of 2030 Operations projected that the Attleboro Alternatives is operationally infeasible due to capacity constraints at South Station that would result in failing the on-time standard for the morning and particularly the evening peak period, and also negatively impact the on-time performance of four south side commuter rail trains.

The Report referenced an analysis of the effect of adding a fourth track to the Northeast Corridor (NEC) north of Readville in order to relieve the system capacity constraints caused by the addition of the Attleboro Alternative's operations to the NEC. The analysis concluded that a fourth track would cause major service disruptions and reconstruction of the Orange Line MBTA service, displace a significant number of businesses and residents in the Back Bay and South End of Boston, adversely impact acres of public open space, take 10-12 years to construct and add nearly \$2.5 billion dollars to the project's construction cost. The combination of these

impediments makes an infrastructure solution to NEC's capacity constraints impracticable. Even without a fourth rail option, the schedule for the necessary addition of a third track to the NEC is projected to be seven years as construction can only occur between 1AM and 5AM in order not to disrupt normal NEC operations, a constructability prescription that strains the boundaries of practicability. The analysis of the dependence of the Attleboro Alternatives on the NEC leads MassDEP to conclude that there are fatal deficiencies in this Alternative's ability to meet the project purpose in regard to the reliability and practicability criteria that cannot be reasonably overcome by expanding the existing system's infrastructure capacity.

L-076.05

The Report further concludes the Rapid Bus Alternative fails to meet the project purposes of regional mobility and reduction of VMT. The Rapid Bus Alternative is limited to six stations in five communities that generate five interregional links, as compared to the rail alternatives that generate over eight times as many links. The Rapid Bus' interregional link limitation results from the need to maintain a travel time that is reasonably comparable to the rail alternatives and have the buses operate at or near their capacity limits at the initial embarkation points, which precludes additional stops along the route.

Based on the Central Planning Transportation Staff (CTPS) analysis, the Rapid Bus only reduces VMT by approximately 81,500 miles, as compared to the rail alternatives' reduction range of 174,000 to 296,000. This is also reflected in the difference among the alternatives in new linked trips which represent the commuters who would otherwise drive to work. The number of Rapid Bus new linked trips is 1700, the rail Alternatives generate from 4,500 to 5,900. A similar disparity exists on the ridership and total new transit-wide boarding measures.

This significantly lower diversion of commuters from automobiles to public transit makes this alternative less effective in addressing the projected increase in traffic congestion and the potential consequences of decreased road safety. While the Rapid Bus will expand access between New Bedford/Fall River and Boston, it will be far less successful than the rail alternatives in achieving the project's regional mobility purpose due to inherent constraints within its operating parameters.

The Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives also exhibit comparatively worse adverse environmental impacts in some, albeit not all, categories than the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives. The Report creates a "report card" ranking matrix under which the best performing alternative is rated as meeting 100% of the performance standard's quantitative objective and receives an A. The other alternatives are then ranked based on the percentage of their performance relative to the top performer. Using that relative ranking system, the Attleboro Alternative received an F in Total Wetlands and Threatened and Endangered Habitat, and Open Space Acquisition categories and a D in the ACEC category. The Rapid Bus Alternative duplicates the Attleboro Alternatives' F scores as well as receiving an F in the ACEC category. In comparison, the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives received all As and Bs, except for a C Whittenton received in the Threatened and Endangered Habitat category. Because the scoring is based on the relative impact among the Alternatives, in some instances the grades do not reflect a significant difference in environmental outcomes. This is not the case in the scale of wetland impacts. The Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives alter nearly twice as many acres of wetlands than the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives. The Rapid Bus Alternative also produces worse

L-076.06



air quality than the no-build in NO<sub>x</sub> and Particulate Matter emissions, and negligible reductions in volatile organic compound and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions based on the use of diesel fuel. L-076.06

In weighing the significance of the report card scores, MassDEP is acutely aware that all of the Alternatives alter or degrade a range of environmentally sensitive resource areas and would require a variance under the Wetland Regulations. MassDEP is also cognizant that some of the quantitative resource impact distinctions may be less significant in evaluating an Alternative's adverse effect than its qualitative impact, for example adverse effects on rare species from the Attleboro Alternative and wildlife habitat from the Stoughton Alternative. However, the combination of the deficient performance of the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives in meeting the project's purpose and practicability standards and their low environmental ranking in multiple categories that are central to MassDEP's regulatory jurisdiction leads MassDEP to conclude that neither of these Alternatives should be selected to be the Alternative to proceed into the FEIS/R review. On that basis, MassDEP reasoned that it would more be productive to conduct a comparative assessment of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives in order provide information relevant to selecting the preferred alternative to scoped for the FEIS/R. Therefore, the balance of this comment letter is confined to considering the benefits and environmental impacts of these two Alternatives. L-076.07

#### Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives Overview

MassDOT identifies the Stoughton Alternative as its preferred alternative stating that it provides the greatest transportation benefit and fully meets the project purpose. The Whittenton and Stoughton Alternatives share the same track bed except for their routes through the Raynham-Taunton area. At the Canton Junction, the Stoughton Alternative continues directly south and passes through Taunton on the east, while the Whittenton Alternative bears southwest and transits Taunton on the west whereupon it connects with the Attleboro secondary and then proceeds southeast to reconnect with the Stoughton line at the Weir Junction. The travel time of the Whittenton Alternatives are 11 minutes longer than the Stoughton Alternatives and the station configurations in Taunton are slightly different; a station in Downtown Taunton on the Whittenton route and one on Dean Street on the Stoughton route.

Although the Whittenton Alternative generates slightly more total ridership (60 passengers), Stoughton's generates 400 more project-linked boardings, representing commuters switching from automobiles to the South Coast system, and an additional 1,000 for the commuter rail system as a whole. A second distinction in the routes is the origin of boarding of the passengers. The Stoughton Alternative draws nearly 50% of its passengers from Fall River and New Bedford and 19% from the Taunton stations. The Whittenton Alternative draws less than 40% of its passengers from Fall River and New Bedford and 26% from its Taunton station. As a result, of the sum and source of its ridership diversion, the Stoughton Electric Alternative reduces 68,000 more vehicle trips per day which yields less VOCs, NO<sub>x</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> per day than the Whittenton Alternative. Therefore, to the extent that the project's need and purpose is focused on meeting the existing and future public transportation demand between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston and enhancing regional mobility, while collaterally improving air quality, it appears to MassDEP that the Stoughton Alternative better serves those ends. If further assessment is conducted of the Alternatives' relative merits to serve the project's purposes, one possible L-076.08

avenue of inquiry is the availability of measures or incentives that would potentially improve the Whittenton Alternative's Southern Triangle boardings and VMT reduction metrics. L-076.08

In further support of the Stoughton Alternative, MassDOT also notes that the Whittenton Alternative will require 12 grade crossings through Taunton raising concerns about safety and noise impacts. The Whittenton Alternative will incorporate 10 crossings now used by the Attleboro Secondary freight line, and reactivate two currently unused crossings. The Report analyzes the traffic impacts at the Whittenton only crossings. The analysis concludes that eight of the crossings will result in only minimal or minor traffic impacts, and the other four may affect traffic operations and the use of driveways abutting the roads on which the cars will queue. The Report offers no information regarding the potential safety impacts on vehicles or pedestrians as a consequence of shifting the line's use from freight to commuter rail and thereby increasing the frequency of train traffic. L-076.09

There is a marked difference in the noise impacts within the City of Taunton associated with the different routes. The Stoughton Electric and Diesel Alternatives' operations will generate 12 and 5 severe noise impacts respectively, as compared to 33 and 40 severe impacts from Whittenton's operations. In addition, the Whittenton Alternative will cause 708 severe horn noise impacts in Taunton as compared to only 28 for Stoughton. The Report concludes that nearly three times the number of affected residents residing in environmental justice neighborhoods in Taunton on the Whittenton route will be disparately impacted by noise in comparison to the percentage affected in non-environmental justice neighborhoods.

As presented in detail below, MassDEP has evaluated the Report in regard to the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives' impacts in areas subject to MassDEP's jurisdiction. The adverse impact of the all Alternatives is significant enough to require the project to obtain a variance from several of the performance standards in the Wetland Regulations (310 CMR 10.00). Due to the overlap of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives' routes, except in the areas between the Weir and Canton Junctions, their environmental impacts are indistinguishable in the Southern Triangle and north of Canton Junction. In those areas where they diverge, however, the Stoughton Alternative adversely impacts more wetland resource protection areas along its route including, for example, Bordering Vegetated Wetlands, vernal pools, and wildlife habitat area owing to its traverse of the Pine Swamp, which the Whittenton Alternative avoids. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, has commented on the significant extent of these Alternatives' impact on the Hockomock Swamp and the adequacy of the Report's analysis, but concludes that the differences in their impact on state listed species should not be a determinative factor in the overall selection between these Alternatives. L-076.10

In sum, the Stoughton Alternative better serves the key measures of addressing the project's need and serving its purposes, but the benefit it accrues in that regard from the geography of its route results in greater harm to significant wetlands resources than the Whittenton Alternative. The Whittenton route, on the other hand, carries the potential of disparately impacting residents in environmental justice neighborhoods with excessive noise. Based on representations made in the Report and the MassDEP's experience, it is reasonably likely that through further minimization, mitigation and compensatory measures, which should be detailed in the FEIS/R, the divergence between these Alternatives can be narrowed to the point where their net differences in L-076.11



environmental impacts will be negligible. In contrast, MassDEP is not aware of additional transportation related measures that can close or substantially narrow the Whittenton Alternative's service of project purposes gap.

L-076.11

#### Wetlands, Rare Species and Biodiversity

As noted earlier, the Stoughton and the Whittenton Alternatives both incorporate the Southern Triangle and also share the route from the Canton Junction north to South Station. The distinction between the two alternatives is the jog Whittenton takes between the Canton and Weir Junctions avoiding the Pine Swamp which the Stoughton Alternative traverses. Both alternatives impact 1.74 acres in the Hockomock Swamp ACEC, with 75% of that impact associated with relocating a stream now confined to the excavated road bed. A trestle will span 1.81 acres of the swamp. In addition, the Stoughton Alternative will permanently impact slightly less than a half acre of wetlands in the Pine Swamp. The diesel versions of the Alternatives have slightly less impact because traction stations are not required.

The Whittenton Alternative has the same or less impacts as the Stoughton Alternative in every wetlands resource category, except for its effect on rare species habitat, connectivity (barrier impacts) and fragmentation. Comparison of these two alternatives shows Whittenton has:

- approximately 1.5 acres less impact on Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW);
- 0.77 acres less impact on vernal pool habitat;
- approximately 0.25 acres less impact on loss of supporting vernal pool upland habitat
- 0.76 acres less impact on Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs);
- Approximately 3.5 acres less impact on Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF).  
Note: measurement of BLSF in acreage is less relevant than its measurement in cubic feet of flood storage lost. However, there is not currently sufficient topographic data to calculate the flood storage losses for each alternative in cubic feet (personal communication, Lisa Standley, Ph.D., VHB, 5/12/11); and
- 13 less occurrences of impacts to Riverfront Area (52 vs. 65).

L-076.12

Note: the number of interceptions of RA is less relevant than the acreage impacted by those occurrences. However, insufficient information is available at present to calculate the impacts on RA acreage (personal communication, Lisa Standley, Ph.D., VHB, 5/12/11, and page 4.16-62 of DEIS/R).

L-076.13

MassDEP's Wetlands Regulations require that projects within wetlands jurisdiction have no short or long term adverse effect on rare species. The project's impacts to rare species will require a wetlands variance. Based on consultation with the Natural Heritage Endangered Species (NHESP), MassDEP relied on the NHESP's Habitat Functions Loss Assessment and NHESP Score (Tables 4.15-27 and 28) in comparing the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives' impact on rare and endangered species rather than the Report's evaluation. Stoughton performed slightly worse than Whittenton with a score of 10.5 vs. 10 for impacts to rare species based on NHESP's methodology. The Tables show that the Stoughton route impacts 1.3 additional acres of Hessel's Hairstreak (butterfly) habit, increasing its habitat loss score by 0.5 over the Whittenton route, with a "moderate", barrier effect score for both alternatives; the Whittenton alternative, however, would have a barrier effect on Box Turtle of an additional 2,100 feet which the Stoughton Alternative would not have. (Table 4.15-28). The NHESP advised MassDEP that

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because the differences in overall state-listed species impacts between these two Alternatives are small, the differentials should not be a determinative factor in evaluating their relative adverse effects and benefits.

L-076.14

In addition to impacts on rare and endangered species, MassDEP regulates impacts to important wildlife habitat as one of the interests of the Wetlands Protection Act. The project will exceed the thresholds for a wildlife habitat evaluation and should be evaluated pursuant to MassDEP's 2006 Wildlife Habitat Guidance Document. Throughout the inter-agency review process, MassDEP raised concerns about the alternatives' impacts on the quality as well as the quantity of the affected habitat. Quantity, e.g. acres of wetland impact, linear feet of bank, etc., has been the traditional way that project impacts have been evaluated in the permitting process. The development of the landscape level assessment methodology, the Comprehensive Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS), has made it possible to assess the impacts of projects qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The use of CAPS to assess project impacts is consistent with the Wildlife Habitat Guidance Document which requires a more detailed Wildlife Habitat Evaluation and additional mitigation for project impacts that occur at locations identified on CAPS maps as having an IEI value of 0.6 – 1.0, i.e. the top 40% of wildlife habitat. In addition, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has accepted Massachusetts' use of CAPS as its landscape level assessment method to meet the monitoring and assessment requirements to evaluate wetland health.

L-076.15

The CAPS model assigns a value of 0 to 1 for each point on the landscape, based on the ability of that point on the landscape to serve as wildlife habitat and generates an Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI). Locations with the best habitat score 1.0, while lower quality habitat scores closer to 0. When the model is run depicting the linear route of an alternative, the interception of a cell degrades the value of that point on the landscape to serve as wildlife habitat. Indirect impacts of the project also diminish the score of the cells as stressors do in the natural landscape where roads, railroads, impervious surfaces and other stressors degrade wildlife habitat not only at the point of interception, but also in the area around them. The DEIS/R used the model to assess the impact on wildlife habitat of this long linear project's relatively small impacts on multiple wetlands along the two routes that were modeled (Stoughton with the trestle and Whittenton with the trestle). The Report's CAPS comparative assessment of impacts showed minor differences in impacts on IEI that indicated the Whittenton Alternative would have greater adverse impacts on connectivity potentially resulting in more habitat fragmentation. However, the superior performance of the Stoughton alternative is due primarily to the fact that the Whittenton route is longer than Stoughton's and therefore intercepts more cells in the model (Scott Jackson, UMass, personal communication, 5/16/11).

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At MassDEP's request, UMass evaluated the degree to which important habitat (IEI > 0.6) in the baseline assessment would be compromised as a result of the Stoughton Alternative's one mile transit of the Pine Swamp, a 275 acre, un-fragmented high quality wetland that the Whittenton Alternative avoids. These results show that the Stoughton Alternative has a greater loss of cells with high IEI (216.3 units) than the Whittenton alternative (202.8 units) (Brad Compton, personal communication 5/20/11). These results when considered together with the CAPS data reported in the DEIS/R indicate that while the Whittenton Alternative would impact 7 units more than the Stoughton Alternative, the Stoughton route would impact 13.5 additional units

L-076.17



considered high value wildlife habitat. UMass calculates that the loss of 13.5 units would be equivalent to 18 acres of Pine Swamp no longer being characterized as important wildlife habitat (i.e. top 40% IEI), representing 6% of the swamp's area. (Brad Compton, UMass, personal communication, 5/26/11)

L-076.17

The location and extent of the project's impacts to wetland resource areas will require several variances from the Wetlands regulations performance standards. The wetland variance performance standards (310 CMR 10.05 (10)) are discussed in the proposed mitigation section of the Report. The three regulatory criteria to demonstrate eligibility for a variance are:

- (1) Demonstration there are no conditions or alternatives under which the project can proceed without a variance;
- (2) Mitigation measures are proposed to allow the project to be conditioned to contribute to Wetland Protection Act interests; and
- (3) Demonstration that the variance is necessary to accommodate an overriding public interest.

The Report documents that there are no project alternatives that could proceed absent receiving a variance, in particular in regard to the impact to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands and activities in an ACEC. The Report also summarizes the basis for MassDOT's contention that the project accommodates an overriding public interest including: addressing a significant need for public transportation improvements in the South Coast region and providing to the region important benefits in the form of public transit equity, service distribution and ridership, air quality and climate change improvements, and opportunities for smart growth and sustainable development as an alternative to sprawl that is projected to occur under the no-build scenario. The Report presents substantial and credible information on those subject matters, several of which have relied upon in other rail projects to support a variance request.<sup>1</sup> The FEIS/R should further refine how the Alternative selected for further review will advance these public interests.

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Meeting the variance criteria requires mitigation measures that will allow the project to contribute to the protection of the interests of the Wetlands Act. It is MassDEP's opinion that in order for either Alternative to go forward, mitigation measures to off-set the project's direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are warranted. Mitigation should directly mitigate wetland impacts, improve wetland conditions and avoid future indirect and cumulative impacts.

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<sup>1</sup> Rail projects reviewed for a variance have included: Greenbush Line Corridor (2002-2004), Plymouth Line and Route 3/3A Interchange Modifications (1994), Old Colony Railroad Neponset River Bridge (1993), Ashland Commuter Rail Station (2000), and Newburyport Extension and Layover facility (1996). The transportation needs addressed by these projects included: alleviating severe traffic congestion during peak periods (Greenbush, Old Colony, Ashland); addressing expected growth in commuters (Greenbush ; Old Colony , Newburyport increase in past 20 years) or high ridership generated (total ridership generated by Ashland Station); address deficient options for regional public transportation (crowding on Old Colony and Red Line, access problems with commuter boat; Old Colony – severe congestion on SE Expressway and Red Line; Newburyport – passenger rail discontinued in 1976 resulting in burden on other lines); reduction of Vehicle Miles Travelled on highways to improve regional traffic flow (Greenbush, Ashland); providing relief for oversubscribed parking demand at other rail and subway stations and in Boston (Greenbush, Old Colony, Ashland); and Increase safety for other drivers and pedestrians (Newburyport).

As stated in the DEIS/R, MassDOT convened a wetland mitigation group in which the Department participated. The group acknowledged that detailed mitigation and compensatory measures would not be developed until the preferred alternative/LEDPA was identified. The DEIS/R also reflects the group's general perspective that "...there are sufficient opportunities within the South Coast region's watersheds to provide adequate compensatory mitigation for any of the alternatives." MassDEP typically requires a 2: 1 ratio for BVW mitigation, at least 1:1 for all other wetlands, and encourages a 2: 1 mitigation for rare species impacts. However, flexibility exists in the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. While the concept of redressing impacts to some wetland resources within the affected watershed rather than on a site specific basis is valid, that conclusion is premature for impacts to BLSF because it is not known currently what extent of compensatory flood storage can be provided at or near the points of impact, as is necessary to address local impacts to the flood control interest of the Act. This information should be developed in detail in the FEIS/R.

L-076.20

The DEIS/R's lack of specificity in the mitigation assessment also limits MassDEP's and other agencies' ability to consider or comment on the extent to which the impacts to habitat connectivity can be mitigated by methods such as providing wildlife passage structures through the rail bed, and the degree to which improvements to stream crossings may help to improve the passage of fish and wildlife. Similarly, insufficient information has been presented to determine the degree to which existing stream crossings within the abandoned rail bed can be improved because of the site specific information needed on topography and rail bed configuration has not been developed.

L-076.21

MassDOT has committed to land acquisition as a component of the mitigation strategies. MassDEP believes that targeted acquisition to mitigate for the cumulative and indirect effects of the project is an important and valuable contribution towards implementation of smart growth principles. Section 5 of the DEIS/R discusses the indirect and cumulative impacts of the project. The model's assumption's yield projections that show that under Scenario 1 (baseline plus induced growth without smart growth measures) the No-build Alternative will result in an additional 44,995 acres of loss, 13.11 of which will be wetlands. The implementation of smart growth principles can reduce those impacts by over 13,800 acres of land, and over 3.5 acres of wetlands. Similar results are predicted for biodiversity effects, which indicates that aggressive implementation of smart growth can reduce habitat impacts by nearly 50% (Table 5-12). Therefore, it is MassDEP's perspective that the maximum implementation of measures to enable smart growth should be adopted.

L-076.22

MassDOT has demonstrated its commitment and resources to conduct and motivate smart growth planning, but it has limited ability to implement Smart Growth land preservation priorities since much of the opportunity to do so depends on each community's willingness to adopt local zoning controls, and landowners' incentives to participate in transfer of development rights and other such smart growth mechanisms described in the Corridor Plan. One concrete means to translate the planning into resource protection is for MassDOT to fund for conservation protection targeted acquisition of parcels in Priority Protection Areas that are important to meet the long term benefit of populations of rare species and preserve land with high IEI. The selection of high IEI parcels for preservation should consider properties that will

L-076.23



not be adversely impacted by the direct or indirect impacts of the project which will reduce IEI scores after construction. L-076.23

Regardless of the final selected alternative, development of a Smart Growth Corridor Plan has the potential to mitigate environmental impacts and advance environmental preservation along the project corridor. The Plan represents an opportunity to advance environmental protection strategies with land use planning which optimizes economic and housing development, contains sprawl, and protects the integrity of critical natural resource habitats. MassDEP encourages the proponent to conduct an analysis of how to optimize land acquisition for areas that will accomplish these three goals and consult with EEA agencies in an effort to identify and protect areas critical to preserving the integrity of existing and valuable ecosystems. MassDOT should also partner with local planning boards and conservation commissions, regional planning agencies, and non-profit land trust/conservation organizations in a coordinated effort to adopt land preservation strategies which serve to stem wetland habitat fragmentation from sprawl commonly associated with unconstrained development. MassDEP requests the Secretary consider requiring this analysis in the FEIS/R in order to identify commitments that will ensure efforts to acquire land meet the project mitigation requirements and longer-term smart growth goals. L-076.24

MassDEP recommends that the mitigation strategies to be presented in the FEIS/R contain the following measures:

- Provide a 2: 1 ratio for BVW mitigation, at least 1:1 for all other wetlands, and encourages a 2: 1 mitigation for rare species impacts, subject to consultation with the NHESP;
  - Propose locations and design specific details for wildlife crossings;
  - Propose removal of targeted portions of the existing rail bed which will not be re-used for the new rail line (such as within the portion of the Hockomock Swamp where trestle will replace existing rail bed), specifically in locations that would improve wildlife habitat and fish passage, increase connectivity and reduce fragmentation without adversely affecting adjacent wetland resources;
  - Develop topographic information and propose improvements to existing stream crossings at site specific locations to improve wildlife and fish passage;
  - Perform meaningful riverfront area improvements and/or restoration to mitigate for riverfront impacts;
  - Provide on-site elevation specific compensatory storage for lost flood storage, or if such compensatory storage cannot be provided, to demonstrate an insignificant increase in flooding, to demonstrate that any incremental increase in flooding could be contained on the proponent's property, or to acquire flood easements;
  - Acquire land to meet the goals of advancing smart growth, providing long term net benefits to rare species and preserving high IEI land;
  - Commit to specific actions to implement the Corridor Plan and to work with communities to implement smart growth;
  - Propose wetland restoration within the Hockomock ACEC.
- L-076.25

While mitigation sites should be designed to preserve critical functions, such as flood storage volume at each locality, restoration of previously impacted wetlands and land preservation may also be considered as part of the mitigation effort. A high level of assurance needs to be provided that land identified for preservation, restriction, or replication/restoration mitigation to be taken by eminent domain can be acquired and will satisfy specific mitigation goals. As part of these assurances, additional fallback mitigation areas should be identified in the event that primary mitigation goals are not achieved.

L-076.26

#### Water Resources, Stormwater and Stream Crossings

The DEIS/R concludes that the Stoughton Alternative would involve temporary construction activities within one Zone A area, Zone II areas for six wells, and the IWPA for two wells which would not result in long-term impacts. During post-construction operations, the alternative would discharge stormwater to these same water supply protection areas plus 10 different waterbodies, including one ORW within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC and the East Branch of the Neponset River in the Fowl Meadow ACEC. The Whittenton Alternative's construction work will occur within one Zone A area, the Zone I area for one well, Zone II areas for 10 wells, and the IWPA for two wells. When post-construction operations commence, it would require stormwater discharges to one Zone A area, Zone II areas for 10 wells, the IWPA for two wells, and 11 different waterbodies, but there are no proposed stormwater discharges to ACEC areas. Both Alternatives incorporate one new station in Easton proposed in a Zone II area. MassDEP concurs with the Report's conclusion that with comprehensive and early planning and design of adequate containment, minimization and mitigation measures and consistent implementation and maintenance procedures, as discussed below, neither Alternatives' discharges would result in impairment of surface or groundwater quality or functions.

L-076.27

The project is required to comply with the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards for work proposed in wetland resource areas and buffer zones pursuant to 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6). In addition, stormwater standards are required to be met for land disturbances 1-acre or greater pursuant to the EPA NPDES Construction General Permit (CGP), when stormwater discharges are proposed to existing outfalls permitted pursuant to the EPA/MassDEP Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit and/or for the proposed Layover Facilities pursuant to the EPA Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP). The referenced State and EPA permits require proponents to demonstrate compliance with Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements.

The DEIS/R generally identifies potential contaminants of concern that may be discharged in stormwater runoff from track drainage, train stations and layover facilities to wetlands and waters of the Commonwealth and the United States. The DEIS/R also generally discusses best management practices that will be considered to treat the stormwater runoff to comply with State and federal stormwater standards. The Report indicates that the proposed conceptual drainage design would ensure that treatment trains are used at station sites that provide 80 percent Total Suspended Solids (TSS) removal and at least 44 percent TSS removal for discharges to Zones I, II and IWPA areas, as required by the Standards, and that appropriate setbacks, volume controls and pretreatment requirements for these Zones and ORW's will be met. The FEIS/R should assess the ability of the selected alternative to meet each of the 10 Massachusetts Stormwater

L-076.28



Standards or specify if a variance to the standards specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6) may be required. L-076.28

The DEIS/R generally discussed Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) or Low Impact Development (LID) practices to manage stormwater runoff at proposed stations and parking facilities. Page 4.17-69 indicates the ESSD practices will be considered during the design phase. Because 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6) require analysis of alternatives to meet stormwater management requirements using ESSD or LID practices, it is highly recommended that ESSD or LID alternatives be assessed early on in project development as their selection will affect the amount of land taking. Otherwise, ESSD or LID alternatives may be precluded as the project design advances to permitting. For example, the Report indicates that deck parking will be considered as an ESSD practice versus at-grade parking. Deck parking has a smaller impervious area footprint and generates much less stormwater runoff than an equivalent number of at-grade parking spaces. Deck parking would mean that less land would need to be acquired than an at-grade parking facility. However, deck parking is substantially more expensive than at-grade parking, so the trade-off between less land taking and higher capital cost is best weighed through an alternatives analysis such as through the MEPA process. L-076.29

ESSD measures can be furthered through assessment of conceptual design principles in the FEIS/R, such as a project commitment to create smaller parking stalls and circulation lanes than traditional parking lots, specifying use of porous pavements in place of traditional pavements, and pavement disconnection versus use of traditional curb and gutter drainage. Other ESSD and LID practices that should be considered besides those listed in the DEIS/R are retaining existing mature non-invasive vegetation, using exfiltrating bio-retention in place of raised traffic islands, and tree box filters. The Report indicates that station and parking alternatives are to be located on developed sites whenever possible as an ESSD measure to minimize increase in stormwater runoff. When existing developed sites are razed for complete tear downs, MassDEP expects that the Stormwater Standards can be fully met versus only to the maximum extent possible as fewer constraints exist with complete tear downs compared to sites which are only minimally redeveloped. MassDEP recommends that the FEIS/R identify a new station, a reconstructed station, and a section of track in an environmentally sensitive area and design to the maximum extent feasible how those structures would be constructed and operated consistent with ESSD and LID concepts. L-076.30

No information appears to have been included regarding whether stormwater peak runoff rate attenuation requirements will be met. Peak rate control structures are in general larger than water quality treatment practices, so the FEIS/R need to assess whether each station and layover facility contains sufficient land area and whether additional right-of-way needs to be purchased along potential rail line routes to place attenuation structures. Stormwater recharge should be analyzed in the FEIS/R for its potential to attenuate peak runoff rates. If the analysis indicates that stormwater recharge can only attenuate a portion of the peak rate attenuation volume, open attenuation structures should be given preference in the analysis over closed structures such as underground chambers, which have higher maintenance requirements. L-076.31

The DEIS/R notes that layover facilities are classified by MassDEP as Land Uses with Higher Potential Pollutant Loads (LUHPPL), where additional measures are required for source control L-076.32

and pretreatment are required. In addition, the FEIS/R should identify the design capacity of the parking proposed at each station. Stations with parking lots for 1,000 vehicle trips or more are also classified as LUHPPL. MassDEP is crediting the top asphalt layer in porous asphalt as meeting the pre-treatment requirements specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(5) for stormwater infiltration from those parking lots with 1,000 vehicle trips or more.

L-076.32

The DEIS/R notes that some alternatives involve Zone A and Zone I of public drinking water sources, as well as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs). Zone A, Zone I, Zone II, ORWs, Vernal Pools and other areas are classified as critical areas pursuant to 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(6). Zone I may only be used for intended drinking water purposes pursuant to 310 CMR 22.00. In a Zone A, 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(6) does not allow stormwater treatment practices or piping unless it's essential to the operation of the public drinking water system. The FEIS/R should identify how each alternative impacts critical areas, and how stormwater requirements will be addressed. Any potential Vernal Pools in the track route or at Stations or Layover Facilities need to be assessed to determine whether they can be certified as Vernal Pools.

L-076.33

There is a TMDL for the Neponset River for pathogens. 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(4) requires stormwater treatment measures to meet TMDL requirements in addition to providing TSS removal. Therefore, the FEIS/R should analyze for provision of measures for stormwater discharges to the Neponset that will meet both the TMDL and TSS removal requirements.

L-076.34

Section 7.4.10 of the DEIS/R indicates existing ditches along rail corridors will be improved to ensure proper drainage. In order to be credited as a stormwater treatment BMP, the improvements will need to be designed to meet specifications listed in the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook, Volume 2 for water quality swales, infiltration trenches, or exfiltrating bio-retention cells. Further, Section 7.4.10 indicates that stormwater systems at existing stations will be upgraded as necessary to accommodate additional pavement. 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(7) requires redevelopment at those existing stations subject to wetland/401 regulations to meet the Stormwater Standards to the maximum extent practicable (MEP) and improve existing conditions. This requires a site specific analysis that describes the measures that can be provided to MEP and improve existing conditions for each Stormwater Standard. For example, if there is an existing station, the analysis needs to examine measures to attenuate runoff from the existing pavement rather than simply looking at attenuating the runoff from the proposed new pavement areas.

L-076.35

The DEIS/R appears to indicate that stormwater runoff will only be addressed when point sources, such as outfalls or drainage ditches, are present or proposed and implies that country drainage of runoff from the track drainage does not require compliance with stormwater management measures. Land disturbance of 1-acre or more is classified as a point source by EPA for purposes of the Construction General Permit. In addition, if the track construction, stations, or layover facilities are in a wetland resource area or buffer zone, the Stormwater Standards at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) apply. The DEIS/R appears to suggest that the track ballast and underlying or adjacent soils will naturally attenuate contaminants of concern in stormwater runoff from rail operations without treatment. The Stormwater Standards require source control measures to minimize potential for contaminants and treatment. The Greenbush rail line included extensive track drainage system, with a combination of drainage swales and perforated

L-076.36



pipe underdrain in the ballast that carried runoff and groundwater to remote locations for discharge to streams, bordering vegetated wetlands and other resource areas located at low points in the track alignment. Because of the need to maintain a dry rail bed, MassDEP anticipates that a similar track drainage system will need to be designed as part of the project, to provide sufficient treatment prior to discharging track drainage runoff to resource areas.

L-076.36

### Stream Crossings

Section 3.2, page 3-101 for the Stoughton Alternative indicates for culverts that would remain in place, existing culverts would be extended to accommodate the wider rail bed. Section 7.4.10 indicates Stream Crossing Standards will be met to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP). Compliance with Stream Crossing Standards is fully required for new culverts reviewed pursuant to Wetland or 401 regulations, and the Corps Programmatic General Permit. Compliance to MEP standards is required for replacement culverts. Constructing extensions to existing culverts may inhibit fish, amphibian, reptile, and other wildlife passage.

The FEIS/R needs to analyze new and replacement culverts ability to fully meet the Stream Crossing Standards, rather than only to the MEP as part of the project mitigation opportunity. Bankfull will need to be identified as the Stream Crossing Standards require new or replacement crossings to be sized to 1.2 times bankfull width at a minimum. Spans and open bottom arches should be analyzed to meet the Standards rather than only analyze closed bottom culverts.

L-076.37

During the comment period, MassDOT met with MassDEP representatives and identified spans and open bottom arches as potential mitigation measures within the track alignment containing the proposed trestle. These potential mitigation measures should be considered throughout the entire track alignment to the extent that they are practicable to improve fish and wildlife passage, and do not interfere with safe train operations. Closed bottom culverts are required to be embedded to a depth of at least 2 feet, so closed bottom culvert designs need to analyze measures to install and maintain the stone. The measures need to be met by use of single culverts, rather than double barrels. Where double or multiple barrels are proposed, at least one barrel should meet the Standards by itself. These measures provide for fish, amphibian, reptile, and other wildlife passage, so it is essential that connectivity be provided. These measures for fish and wildlife passage need to be included as part of project design and not deferred to installation at a later time.

### Chapter 91

The licensing research and historic water lines were provided by the MassDEP. The DEIS/R identifies several areas where the railroad alignment crosses non-tidal rivers or streams as well as areas where the railroad bed, station or layover facility is proposed on filled tidelands. There is no work proposed within flowed tidelands.

At the level of detail provided in the DEIS/R, the filled tidelands present at the Fall River Battleship Cove Station and at the New Bedford Whale's Tooth Station and Wamsutta layover facility could be considered landlocked tidelands as defined at 310 CMR 9.02. MassDEP welcomes the opportunity to view more detailed plans to confirm. The FEIS/R

L-076.38

should provide a public benefit determination consistent with chapter 168 of the Acts of 2007.

L-076.38

According to the DEIS/R, the layover facilities in Fall River at Weaver Cove East, Weaver Cover West and the ISP off North Main Street along the west side of the Fall River Secondary line are located on filled tidelands. MassDEP established the presumptive line of jurisdiction through professional review of a series of historic maps of the coast. To rebut this presumption, the project team needs to provide, in the FEIS/R and advisably through earlier consultation with MassDEP, a reliable surveyed map or plan that depicts the mean high water mark prior to alteration/impoundment and that can be accurately registered to a contemporary base map and was not available to the presumptive line professional team, along with other information as may be available such as cross-sections of the railroad construction.

L-076.39

MassDEP welcomes the opportunity to meet with the project team to make a definitive jurisdictional determination, as offered in the DEIS/R, based on either field inspection or plans providing greater detail. For planning purposes, the project team should note the following.

- If a non-tidal river or stream is navigable by any vessel any time of the year, presume that public funds have been expended "either upstream or downstream within the river basin" (emphasis added) and will be subject to jurisdiction under MGL c. 91 and 310 CMR 9.00. Lacking a definitive list of where public funds have been expended, MassDEP presumes as a general rule that only the non-navigable uppermost reaches of a river basin are not subject to review.
- The presence of a culvert should not automatically presume a lack of navigation. A field inspection can determine if a canoe or kayak can traverse through a culvert given its length, width and ground elevation.
- If the structure was previously authorized by license or legislation, a minor modification of that authorization is an option as described at 9.05(3)(a) and 9.22(2). MassDEP disagrees with the author's interpretation of that a Minor Modification can replace licensing for existing unauthorized rail structures. If no authorization is found for the existing structure, then a license application is expected to be submitted.
- The exception to licensing at 310 CMR 9.05(3) (c) would only apply if the project team is able to demonstrate the "continuation of a public service project", which presumably would not be true on a rail bed that has been in disuse for a number of years.

L-076.40

Determination of Water-Dependency: At the scale of the plans provided in the DEIS/R, it is difficult to determine the water-dependency of the proposed rail crossings. However, if the proposed crossing spans the water body from one bank to the opposite bank, the Secretary could determine through the MEPA review that it would be unreasonable to be located away from the tidal or inland water and thereby consider the crossing water-dependent pursuant to 310 CMR 9.12(2)(d).

L-076.41

MassDEP agrees with the statement in the DEIS/R that the use of filled tidelands for railroad layover yards in Fall River at Weaver Cove East, Weaver Cover West and the ISP yard off North Main Street are non-water dependent use infrastructure facilities.



Regulatory Standards: All railroad components subject to licensing will be reviewed under the standards of 310 CMR 9.31-9.40, and, for nonwater-dependent infrastructure, under 310 CMR 9.54 and 9.55. Table 4.18-12 summarizes the regulatory standards applicable to this project accurately with the following exceptions.

- Note that “replacement, reconstruction or other modification” to existing railroad beds is allowed, even in a Designated Port Area, provided there is limited net encroachment per 310 CMR 9.31(2)(b) and (c).
- The Final EIR should articulate in what ways the South Coast rail project is consistent with the approved Municipal Harbor Plans for Fall River and New Bedford, per 310 CMR 9.34. Of specific note, the DEIS/R states that intermodal connection to the ferry service in New Bedford is desirable but there was no discussion of how this would be achieved.
- The FEIS/R should articulate how the railroad components subject to licensing will preserve or enhance navigational capacity and maintain or enhance public access pursuant to 310 CMR 9.35 and 9.36. Further detail should be provided to better understand the statement in Table 4.18-12 that “wherever this cannot be achieved, feasible mitigation or compensation measures would be provided.” This is interpreted, at 310 CMR 9.35(1), as enhancing the public’s rights, such as navigation, fishing or providing alternative public access opportunities. Mitigating flood and erosion related hazards and attaining water quality standards are laudable goals but need to be related back to how these measures enhance the inherent rights of the public to be applicable.
- For the nonwater-dependent layover facilities, the performance standards of 310 CMR 9.54 and 9.55 would be applicable; the standards of 9.51 and 9.53 would not be applicable. While it is understood that public access may be restricted in a railroad yard, the FEIS/R should explore where on or near the layover facility the project team can “take reasonable measures to provide open spaces for active or passive recreation at the water’s edge” pursuant to 9.55(2).

L-076.42

Public Benefit Determination: The FEIS/R should provide a public benefit determination consistent with chapter 168 of the Acts of 2007 that includes, among other factors, the benefits to the public trust rights in tidelands and environmental protection or preservation.

L-076.43

### Air Quality

In accordance with the April 2009 MEPA Certificate, the air quality analyses of the Alternatives were based on current MassDEP and EPA approved modeling techniques and compared existing and future 2016 and 2030, No-Build and Build conditions for each of the project alternatives. The No-Build condition assumes a limited increase in existing bus service.

The DEIS/R indicates that the proposed project results in emissions reductions from shifts in automobile trips to commuter rail or rapid bus service (i.e., reduction in VMT and traffic congestion). The level of emissions reductions depends on the number of trips diverted to transit for each project alternative. The DEIS/R’s air quality analyses included an evaluation of commuter rail and rapid bus services (travelling and idling) using diesel fuel or electric power.

The DEIS/R includes mesoscale and microscale analyses of vehicular emissions for each Alternative. The DEIS/R briefly describes three fuel options for the Rapid Bus Alternative, including biodiesel and natural gas. However the air quality analysis did not provide an evaluation of the difference in emissions from the fuel options and assumed the use of diesel fuel only. MassDEP recommends that the Expanded Bus service use examine the use of alternative fuels and incorporate their use whenever feasible. The air quality analyses assume that all locomotives used in the rail alternatives will be new.

L-076.44

The mesoscale analysis estimated regional, daily volatile organic compounds (VOCs), oxides of nitrogen (NOX), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter 2.5 and 10 microns in diameter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) emissions resulting from the changes in average daily traffic volume, roadway characteristics, and vehicle emission rates. The mesoscale analysis also determined the change in total ozone precursor emissions within the regional study area. The study area included roadways identified by the CTPS regional model, which generally encompasses eastern Massachusetts. The mesoscale analysis also estimated carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission impacts in tons per year in accordance with the MEPA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Policy.

The microscale analysis calculated the CO and PM concentrations resulting from increased vehicle emissions at congested intersections near the project stations. The intersections were selected based on the highest congestion levels measured by level of service in localized study areas around each of the twelve stations. A separate stationary source analysis estimated locomotive idling and plug-in power generation emissions at two proposed train layover facilities.

Both the Stoughton (Electric and Diesel) and Whittenton (Electric and Diesel) would reduce emissions of VOC, NOX, CO, CO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> when compared to the No-Build condition. In addition, the results of the air quality analyses predict that these four project alternatives will not result in exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for CO, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Emission reductions from the Stoughton and Whittenton Electric Alternatives are greater than the corresponding Stoughton and Whittenton Diesel Alternatives even when using new and cleaner diesel locomotives. This is primarily a function of better service quality (faster travel times) and, to a lesser extent, reduced traffic congestion. NOX emission reductions in particular are greater with the Stoughton and Whittenton Electric Alternatives.

MassDEP recognizes that there are differences in the emission outcome between the Alternatives; however, the differences are minor at the mesoscale levels. Except for Whittenton's Electric's CO air quality benefits, the results of the air quality analyses presented on Table 4.9-26 summarizing the 2030 mesoscale impacts for each Alternative show that the Stoughton Electric provides the best overall emission reduction of VOC, NOx, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> of all the Alternatives.

L-076.45

MassDEP strongly supports the proponent's commitment to the following construction period mitigation measures:

- Require construction contractors to follow all applicable regulations regarding control of construction vehicles emissions through proper equipment and motor vehicle

L-076.46



maintenance, the prohibition of excessive idling of construction equipment engines as required by MassDEP regulations in 310 CMR 7.11.

- Require contract stipulation that all diesel construction equipment used on-site will be fitted with after-engine emission controls such as diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) or diesel particulate filters (DPFs),
- Require contractors to implement appropriate dust control measures such as spraying stockpiles and regular sweeping of roadways adjacent to construction zones.

L-076.46

### Greenhouse Gas and Smart Growth

The April 2009 Certificate called for the DEIS/R to provide information on a substantial number of GHG related topics including fuels, building energy efficiency and renewable energy. The Report expressly did not address building energy efficiency or renewable energy assessment based on the rationale that the project's buildings would be open to the outside and not use HVAC equipment. The Report also concluded that while there would be no difference in residential GHG generation between business as usual and a smart growth scenario. The only operational air quality mitigation commitment made is for plug ins and electric block heaters at layover facilities.

L-076.47

MassDEP believes that the Report's rationale for not conducting any stationary source GHG analysis is inconsistent with other MEPA projects subject to the GHG Policy that have evaluated interior and exterior/parking lot lighting for energy efficiency and reliance on photovoltaic energy. While the quantitative energy savings will not be determinative in selecting the FEIS/R Alternative or perhaps substantive enough to justify quantification by modeling, the FEIS/R should identify GHG reduction-related design and operational features that MassDOT will commit to implement. Those commitments should provide for flexibility and incentives to motivate MassDOT to search out the most innovative solutions available when the stations and related facilities are in real-time design and construction.

The Report estimates that even accounting for induced growth, the Stoughton/Whittenton Alternative will result in a net GHG reduction over the No-Build scenario as a result of emission reductions driven by new state and federal rules governing mobile sources. In addition, the DEIS/R projects that in excess of 450,400 VMTs would be reduced as a result of a fully implemented smart growth strategy, but the estimated mileage savings are not converted into GHG reductions. As with the stationary source projections, estimating the GHG mobile-related smart growth may not be significant enough to justify modeled quantification, but the DEIS/R is deficient in failing to identify GHG mitigation commitments that will contribute towards reductions in VMTs.

L-076.48

The DEIS/R indicates that a feeder bus network is "envisioned" by MassDOT to connect the urbanized communities in South Coast region to the stations. A feeder bus network would provide an alternative to driving to stations and would support an expanded TOD effect if MassDOT provided and/or worked with developers to facilitate shuttle buses from business parks, mixed use developments and malls to the stations. MassDEP fully supports the concept of a feeder/shuttle bus network with frequent and convenient local bus linkage to the stations. MassDEP believes a feeder/shuttle bus network that enhances local and intra-regional access to

L-076.49

the stations should be a project commitment and recommends the proponent in cooperation with the two regional transit authorities further explore the concept and provide a project update in the FEIS/R. Feeder buses should accommodate commuters who choose to bike to bus stops. Rail stations should provide adequate bike racks and storage and also provide space and other support for programs that allow train riders to pick up bikes at one locate and drop them off elsewhere. MassDOT should commit to make the project a flagship for implementation of its GreenDOT program.

L-076.49

### Environmental Justice

The Report examines the potential benefits to and impacts on communities with environmental justice populations. As noted earlier, the project's purpose is to improve public transportation access to Boston and regional mobility for Fall River and New Bedford, communities with over 57% and 68% environmental justice populations, respectively. The absence of public transit access is particularly significant to these communities where over 20% of the households do not own an automobile in comparison to the other South Coast communities' rates of 90% or more.

The Report examined whether environmental justice populations would suffer a disparate impact as a result of the project looking at factors including: neighborhood fragmentation, residential and disruption and vibration and noise, and air quality. Air pollution will increase slightly with the use of diesel engines, but the emissions will not result in exceedance of any NAAQS.

In regard to noise, the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives were generally found not to disparately impact environmental neighborhoods in terms of the percentages of affected residences within an environmental justice neighborhood as compared to the total affected population, although overall the Whittenton Alternative impacts the greatest number of residents and Stoughton the least among all alternatives. In specific communities however, both routes have disparate impacts, particularly the Whittenton Alternative's comparative impact in Taunton. The Stoughton Alternative will have a disproportionate noise impact in Stoughton, 25% of the affected residents, 97 homes, being located in an environmental justice neighborhood. Along the Attleboro Secondary portion of the Whittenton route in Taunton, over 500 residences in environmental justice neighborhoods will be impacted, equaling 35% of the affected population. It should be noted these residents are currently impacted by freight train operations, which operate on a significantly reduced frequency than the proposed commuter rail.

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The Report summarizes MassDOT's noise mitigation policy which makes the construction of noise barriers subject to a per-resident cost effectiveness criterion. Based on the difference in impacts, it is projected that the Whittenton Alternative will cost \$420,000 more to implement noise mitigation than required for the Stoughton route. While mitigation cost-effectiveness cannot be ignored, MassDEP has concerns that proceeding on the basis that MassDOT's mitigation commitment is to be limited to its policy formula may not adequately address compliance with MassDEP's air quality regulations and Noise Policy or the disparate impact in certain environmental justice neighborhoods. MassDEP recommends that for the selected Alternative, the FEIS/R more closely evaluate noise impacts and mitigation and make commitments that address the above concerns.


L-076.51



The extent to which the project may provide benefits to environmental justice communities is a mixed calculation with certain neighborhoods potentially gaining in value from their proximity to stations that draw transit oriented development and other neighborhoods declining due to increased noise effects. In improving access to jobs, hospitals, colleges and reducing travel time to Boston, the Stoughton Alternative consistently out-performed the Whittenton Alternative in comparison to the No-Build Alternative. The City of Fall River was the largest beneficiary of the project's job inducing benefits and New Bedford benefited the least.

MassDEP looks forward to continue to work with MassDOT and the inter-agency work group on this project. If there are questions on any of the comments, please contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Philip Weinberg  
Associate Commissioner

Cc: Kristina Eagan, EOT  
Lisa Standley, VHB  
Richard Lehan, DFG



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

# Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Wayne F. MacCallum, *Director*

May 27, 2011

Richard Sullivan, Secretary  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office, Aisling O'Shea, EEA No.14346  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, N.E. District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

<i>Project &amp; Document Reviewed:</i>	<i>South Coast Rail Project DEIS/DEIR</i>
<i>Proponent:</i>	<i>Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MDOT)</i>
<i>NHESP Tracking No.</i>	<i>98-3735</i>

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (the "Division") has reviewed the South Coast Rail Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIS/DEIR") and would like to offer the following comments.

The DEIS/DEIR presents a description of the purpose and need for the project and considers a range of alternatives which differ in their ability to achieve the stated project goals, cost, and constructability. The project alternatives also vary considerably in extent of impacts to state-listed endangered species, wildlife habitat, wetlands, open space, and other environmental resources.

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program ("NHESP") of the Division is responsible for implementation of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, M.G.L. c. 131A ("MESA"), and its implementing regulations at 321 CMR 10.00. As discussed in Section 4.15 of the DEIS/DEIR, all of the project alternatives involve some level of work in Priority Habitat of Rare Species and Estimated Habitat of Rare Wetland Wildlife. Consequently, MDOT will be required to file with the NHESP for review of the work under MESA.

The alternatives assessed in the DEIS/DEIR vary greatly as to the extent of their impact to state-listed species and their habitats, and NHESP's preliminary analysis suggests that it *may* be possible to avoid the need for a MESA Conservation & Management Permit for all but one of the proposed DEIS/DEIR alternatives (Stoughton, "straight" and Whittenton variants). However, even if the need for a MESA Conservation & Management Permit could not be completely avoided for the Attleboro and Rapid Bus alternatives (e.g., due to impacts to priority habitat associated with constructing a second track along portions of the New Bedford Main Line), any required endangered species mitigation would be modest compared to the mitigation that would be required for the Stoughton alternative.

L-065.01

The Stoughton alternative would use an inactive railroad right of way that bisects the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern ("ACEC"). At  $\pm 16,950$  acres, this ACEC encompasses the largest freshwater wetland system in Massachusetts. The Hockomock Swamp provides habitat for numerous state-listed species and a great diversity of native plants and animals. The Stoughton alternative would also bisect the  $\pm 5,000$  acre Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area ("WMA") managed by the Division for the protection of wildlife and their habitats as well as for public's enjoyment and use.

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An Agency of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement



As outlined in Section 4.15, the Stoughton alternative would result in the loss of state-listed species habitat and would fragment a large habitat, wetland, and open space complex, partially interrupting a migratory corridor used by state-listed species such as the Blanding's Turtle, Eastern Box Turtle, and Blue-spotted Salamander as well as by a variety of other wildlife species. In contrast, the other proposed DEIS/DEIR alternatives would run within or immediately adjacent to existing active rail lines (Attleboro) or existing highways (Rapid Bus). Although these alternatives might impact some Priority Habitat areas, the endangered species impacts and habitat fragmentation effects would be modest, especially in comparison to the Stoughton Alternative.

#### Endangered Species Impact Analysis

The Executive Summary, Section 4.15, and Section 3.3.3.2 of the DEIS/DEIR contain various qualitative and quantitative measures of the adverse impacts of the various alternatives on state-listed species. This includes a summary of an impact analysis completed by the NHESP, which properly concludes that the Stoughton Alternatives would have far greater impacts to state-listed species and their habitats than the Attleboro or Rapid Bus alternatives (Section 4.15.3.5, see "NHESP Scores" and "Overall Habitat Functions Lost," and "Barrier Effects" in the various tables). This conclusion is similarly reflected in the "Barrier Effect Grade" in Table 3.3-24 which assigns a grade of "F" to the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives and a grade of "A" to the Rapid Bus and Attleboro alternatives. We note that compared to the Stoughton straight alternative, the Whittenton alternative impacts one additional area of Box Turtle Priority Habitat, but it also avoids the ecologically significant Pine Swamp Atlantic White Cedar wetland that supports a state-listed butterfly. However, because the differences in overall state-listed species impacts between these two Stoughton alternatives are small, it is the Division's opinion that they should not play a determinative role in evaluation of the relative impacts and merits of these two variants of the Stoughton alternative.

L-065.02

The DEIS/DEIR presents other measures for assessing the state-listed species habitat impact of the alternatives: (1) the total acreage of Priority Habitat impacted with or without existing disturbed areas included, and (2) the individual species impact assessments based on vegetation cover types. In the Division's view, these measures may not provide a meaningful basis for comparing state-listed species impacts among the various alternatives, and therefore, should not be used by the Army Corps or MEPA in determining the LEDPA or evaluating which alternatives should be carried forward. The Division believes that the calculations of total acreage of Priority Habitat impacted do not adequately take into account habitat quality or the habitat requirements of the various species, indirect effects, or barrier effects. These broader considerations are necessary to meaningfully assess the effect of a given acreage of impact on a given listed species. In addition, the NHESP disagrees with some of the assumptions of the individual species impact assessments performed by the project proponent based on the vegetation cover type assumptions shown in Table 4.15-9. As examples, (1) Wood Turtles make extensive use of USS, AG, P, and CL cover types; (2) Blue-spotted Salamanders are associated with RM, RM/AWC; (3) Long-leaved Panic Grass can be associated with W (e.g. seasonally drying pondshores), P, and other open canopy settings (e.g. swales, wet meadows, some of which are small and do not classify as wetland based on aerial photo-interpretation; and (3) the host plant for Water Willow Stem Borer is associated with a great diversity of wetland types including W (pond and lake margins), M, SS, vernal pools, and wetter sections of bogs. Finally, the Division notes that the project proponent has recently confirmed an error in the habitat impact acreage calculations related to the Whittenton alternative as presented in several locations in the DEIS/DEIR, including Tables 4.15-22 and 4.15-30. This results in an understatement of the acreage of Priority Habitat impacted by the Whittenton alternative, which actually has impact acreages roughly comparable to the Stoughton "straight" alternative.

L-065.03

Instead, the Division recommends that the Barrier Effect Grade shown in Table 3.3-24, and the NHESP scores and overall assessment of "Habitat Functions Lost" (see tables in Section 4.15.3.5) be used for evaluating the alternatives. Although the Division believes that this subset of the state-listed species information provided in the DEIS/DEIR is adequate for this stage of project evaluation, if the ACOE or MEPA require additional quantitative analysis of the relative state-listed species impacts of the various alternatives, we strongly recommend that the project proponent, the Army Corps and MEPA consult with the NHESP in developing or applying other state-listed species metrics.

Before a project can be eligible for a MESA Conservation & Management Permit, the Director of the Division must first determine that impacts to state-listed species and their habitats have been adequately avoided and minimized, and that the "applicant has adequately assessed alternatives to both temporary and permanent impacts to State-listed Species" (321 CMR 10.23). In addition to the habitat impact assessment discussed above, the DEIR/DEIS contains detailed information about the practicability of the various alternatives and the extent to which the various

L-065.04

alternatives achieve the project purposes. Although the Division will not render a final decision until after receipt of a MESA filing and/or Conservation & Management Permit application, review of public and agency comments, and completion of the MEPA process, it is the Division's opinion that the alternatives analysis presented in the DEIS/DEIR is adequate for this stage in the project review process.

L-065.04

The Division anticipates that one or more alternatives will be retained for further consideration and analysis in the FEIS/FEIR. As acknowledged in the DEIS/DEIR, a more detailed, finer-scale quantification of state-listed species habitat impacts will be conducted during this next phase of review. The NHESP should be consulted about methodology prior to the initiation of further habitat analysis. Similarly, the Division expects that a more detailed quantification of impacts to vernal pool habitat, general wildlife, and state-owned open space will be conducted on the alternative(s) that advance, so that a similarly detailed impact minimization and mitigation plan is included in the FEIS/FEIR.

L-065.05

The Division requests that the FEIR/FEIS contain a comprehensive description of how the project proponent proposes to meet MESA regulatory requirements, including the standards for authorizing a take of a state-listed species through a Conservation & Management Permit, if applicable. This should include detailed information and discussion about rare species and wildlife crossing and barrier design (e.g. culverts and bridges), as well as other impact minimization measures such as construction management to minimize turtle and salamander mortality. Similarly, the FEIR/FEIS should also thoroughly address how the alternative(s) would meet the long term "net-benefit" standard in 321 CMR 10.23 if applicable, including presenting, after consultation with the NHESP, mitigation proposals that are significantly more specific than those described in the DEIS/DEIR. Finally, we request that the EIR/EIS include detailed information about how the project proponent will mitigate impacts to vernal pools, general wildlife, and as discussed below, state-owned open space affected by the project.

L-065.06

#### Fisheries Concerns

24 named rivers and streams are potentially crossed or adjacent to the alternatives. For a list of species and fisheries survey results for each river or stream, please see Attachment 1.

L-065.07

Stocked trout waters are highly susceptible to changes in water quality and/or quantity such as siltation, water level fluctuations, loss of riparian habitat and alterations of the temperature regime. Therefore, the project must not in any way diminish the ability of Beaver Brook, Rattlesnake Brook or the Wading River to support stocked trout.

L-065.08

Best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control must be adhered to for all phases of construction to minimize potential impacts to the fisheries resources. To the greatest extent practicable, all in stream work should be conducted during low flow periods throughout the year. Times of year when stream flow is high due to extended rain and/or snow melt events should be avoided. If the projects results in the replacement of existing culverts, the culvert replacement should meet the replacement recommendations found in the "Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards: Technical Guidelines, August 6, 2004" (the Standards) including, a minimum height of 6 feet, openness ratio of 0.5–0.75, natural bottom substrates through the crossing structure, and spanning 1.2 times the bank-full width to the greatest extent practical. If the project results in the placement of new culverts, the new crossing structure should, at minimum, meet the general standards for new crossing and strive for the optimum standards whenever possible including, a minimum height of 6 feet, openness ratio of 0.5–0.75, natural bottom substrates through the crossing structure, and spanning 1.2 times the bank-full width to the greatest extent practical. The Standards can be found at [http://www.umass.edu/nrec/pdf\\_files/guidelines\\_river\\_stream\\_crossings.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/nrec/pdf_files/guidelines_river_stream_crossings.pdf). Also, if the project will alter the streambed, we request that the existing grade be maintained.

L-065.09

#### Impacts to Hockomock Wildlife Management Area & Other Open Space

In addition to the NHESP's regulatory role, the Division manages Wildlife Management Areas ("WMAs") for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth. As discussed above, the Stoughton alternative would use an inactive railroad right of way that bisects the Hockomock Swamp WMA. As a result, the Stoughton alternative has the potential to adversely affect the quality of habitat within the WMA, and to impact public access and use.

L-065.10

More specifically, the Division notes that the alternatives analysis provided in Section 3 of the DEIS/DEIR may understate the relative adverse impact to open space for the Stoughton Alternative by focusing exclusively on acreage of protected open space impacted. Given the ecological significance of the Hockomock, and the fact that



the Stoughton Alternative will bisect the WMA resulting in significant wetland, habitat, and open space fragmentation, it is the Division's opinion that the Stoughton Alternative is likely to have a greater adverse impact to protected open space than the other alternatives, despite a potentially lower acreage impacted.

L-065.10

For these reasons, the Division requests that the FEIR/FEIS contain a significantly more detailed and refined analysis of the scope of open space impacts associated with the Stoughton alternative's route through the Hockomock Swamp, including any impacts or infrastructure (e.g., access roads) related to the construction or ongoing maintenance of the trestle and railbed and right-of-way, as well as set forth a detailed plan to minimize and mitigate unavoidable open space impacts.. This more detailed impact analysis and mitigation plan should be completed for any other alternative(s) carried forward in the FEIR/FEIS.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Given the Commonwealth's increased concern about the extent to which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions may impact the environment and our native flora and fauna, we request that the DEIS/DEIR provide a more comprehensive analysis of the extent to which the project will impact overall GHG emissions. This should include an analysis of GHG emissions associated with construction implementation as well as production of materials and supplies (e.g. trains, rails, ties, other building supplies). Finally, the Division recommends a coarse analysis of the GHG emissions associated with increases in secondary development attributed to the rail project. Although the current analysis shows a net decrease in GHG emissions associated with the project, to the extent that a more comprehensive analysis shows that the project alternatives result in a net increase in GHG emissions over the no-build alternative, the Division recommends that any increase be offset through mitigation.

L-065.11

In closing, the Division commends MDOT for taking a proactive approach to addressing endangered species permitting issues and other environmental impacts to-date. This includes, but is not limited to, a continuing commitment to constructing a trestle through a portion of the Hockomock Swamp, should the Stoughton Alternative be constructed. The Division looks forward to continued consultation with the project proponent and inter-agency working group, should this project move forward, as we continue to fulfill our MESA regulatory function. If you have any questions about the MESA portion of this letter, please contact Jon Regosin, Ph.D. at (508) 389-6376. If you have any questions about the portion of this letter dealing with the Hockomock Wildlife Management Area, please contact Jason Zimmer, Southeast District Manager at (508) 759-3406. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,



Thomas W. French, Ph.D.  
Assistant Director

Attachment (1)

cc: Kristina Egan, EOT  
Lisa Standley, VHB  
Richard Lehan, General Counsel, DFG  
Chris Boelke, NOAA  
Tim Timmerman, EPA  
Ed Reiner, EPA  
Maria Tur, USFWS  
Nat Tipton, DCR  
Liz Sorenson, ACEC, DCR  
MEPA Coordinator, DEP SERO  
Philip Weinberg, Lealdon Langley, & Mike Stroman, DEP

Jason Zimmer, DFW  
Rich Hartley, DFW  
Jack Buckley, DFW  
Town of Acushnet  
Town of Attleboro  
Town of Berkley  
Town of Boston  
Town of Braintree  
Town of Canton  
Town of Dartmouth  
Town of Dedham  
Town of Dighton  
Town of Easton  
Town of Fairhaven  
Town of Fall River  
Town of Foxborough  
Town of Freetown  
Town of Lakeville  
Town of Mansfield  
Town of Mattapoisett  
Town of Middleborough  
Town of New Bedford  
Town of Norton  
Town of Norwood  
Town of Quincy  
Town of Raynham  
Town of Rehobeth  
Town of Rochester  
Town of Sharon  
Town of Somerset  
Town of Stoughton  
Town of Swansea  
Town of Taunton  
Town of Westport



Attachment 1. Fisheries survey results for each river or stream potentially crossed or adjacent to the alternatives.

Fisheries surveys of the Assonet River have yielded 7 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus*).

Fisheries surveys of Beaver Brook have yielded 8 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus*) and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*). Additionally, the brook is annually stocked in the spring with brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout, rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and/or tiger trout (*Salmo trutta x Salvelinus fontinalis*).

Fisheries surveys of Cedar Swamp River have yielded 6 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), banded sunfish (*Enneacanthus obesus*), creek chubsucker (*Erimyzon oblongus*), brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*) and swamp darter (*Etheostoma fusiforme*).

Fisheries surveys of the Cotley River have yielded 5 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and swamp darter (*Etheostoma fusiforme*).

Fisheries surveys of Dam Lot Brook have yielded 4 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) and tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*).

Fisheries surveys of Fall Brook have yielded 7 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), banded sunfish (*Enneacanthus obesus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), creek chubsucker (*Erimyzon oblongus*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*) and redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*).

Fisheries surveys of Furnace Brook have yielded 3 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) and tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*).

Fisheries surveys of Hodges Brook have yielded 4 species: creek chubsucker (*Erimyzon oblongus*), fallfish (*Semotilus corporalis*), redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*) and tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*).

Fisheries surveys of the Mill River have yielded 10 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), common shiner (*Notropis cornutus*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*) and tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*).

Fisheries surveys of the Neponset River have yielded 14 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), redfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*), swamp darter (*Etheostoma fusiforme*), white perch (*Morone americana*), white sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*) and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*).

Fisheries surveys of the Pine Swamp Brook have yielded 4 species: brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and redbfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*).

Fisheries surveys of the Queset Brook have yielded 3 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*) and tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*).

Fisheries surveys of the Rattlesnake Brook have yielded 4 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), banded sunfish (*Enneacanthus obesus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*) and redbfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*). Additionally, the brook is annually stocked in the spring with brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout, rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and/or tiger trout (*Salmo trutta* x *Salvelinus fontinalis*).

The Taunton River supports a wide variety of warm and estuarine fish species. Fisheries surveys have yielded 28 species: alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), Atlantic menhaden (*Brevortia tyrannus*), banded killifish (*Fundulus diaphanous*), black crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*), blacknose dace (*Rhinichthys atratulus*), blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), common shiner (*Notropis cornutus*), creek chubsucker (*Erimyzon oblongus*), crevalle jack (*Caranx hippos*), fallfish (*Semotilus corporalis*), gizzard shad (*Dorosoma cepedianum*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), inland silverside (*Menidia beryllina*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), mummichog (*Fundulus heteroclitus*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), redbfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*), striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*), tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*), white perch (*Morone americana*), white sucker (*Catastomus commersoni*) and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*).

Fisheries surveys of the Three Mile River have yielded 8 species: bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), redbfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*), tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*) and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*).

Fisheries surveys of the Town River have yielded 7 species: bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), white sucker (*Catastomus commersoni*) and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*).

The Wading River supports a wide variety of fish species. Fisheries surveys have yielded 14 species: American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), banded sunfish (*Enneacanthus obesus*), bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), common shiner (*Notropis cornutus*), creek chubsucker (*Erimyzon oblongus*), fallfish (*Semotilus corporalis*), golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*), redbfin pickerel (*Esox americanus americanus*) and white sucker (*Catastomus commersoni*). Additionally, the river is annually stocked in the spring with brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout, rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and/or tiger trout (*Salmo trutta* x *Salvelinus fontinalis*).

Fisheries surveys of Whitman Brook have yielded 4 species: chain pickerel (*Esox niger*), largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedii*).

We currently have no fisheries survey information for Black Brook, the Blue Hill River, Lovett Brook, Steep Brook or Terry Brook.





Paul J. Diodati  
Director

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

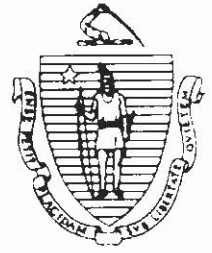
## Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617)626-1520

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Deval Patrick  
Governor

Timothy P. Murray  
Lt. Governor

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Secretary

Mary B. Griffin  
Commissioner

May 27, 2011

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St. Ste. 900  
Boston, MA 02114  
Attn: Nicholas Zavolas

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Re: NAE-2007-00698

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

The Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to develop a public transportation system for the South Coast region, "the South Coast Rail Project," with respect to potential impacts to marine fisheries resources and habitat.

Many of the rivers and streams listed in Table 4.14-7 of the Biodiversity section of the DEIS/DEIR provide passage and spawning habitat for diadromous fish species as well as winter flounder and various species of shellfish. Species identified for these rivers and streams and recommended time-of-year (TOY) restrictions for in-water work in these systems are included below (Table 1). Recommended TOY restrictions are based on cross-referencing the rivers and streams identified in the DEIS/DEIR with the recently released Recommended Time of Year Restrictions (TOYs) for Coastal Alteration Projects to Protect Marine Fisheries Resources in Massachusetts<sup>1</sup>. These restrictions may not be required if the proponent can demonstrate that the actual construction location is outside the area used by diadromous species (e.g., upstream of an obstruction to fish passage) or uses methods that will not affect fish passage or use of spawning riffles (e.g., containment structures). Recommended TOYs are included for the Fall season for several rivers to protect emigrating juveniles. These restrictions may not be required if the proposed work will not obstruct passage. There are efforts underway to improve the maps of fish passage and spawning locations which may be available in the next 12 months and can benefit the construction planning process.

L-066.01

<sup>1</sup> Evans, N.T., Ford, K.H., Chase, B.C., and Sheppard, J. 2011. Recommended Time of Year Restrictions (TOYs) for Coastal Alteration Projects to Protect Marine Fisheries Resources in Massachusetts. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Technical Report, TR-47.

**Table 1. Species present and recommended time-of-year restrictions (TOYs) for river and stream crossings for the South Coast Rail Project.**

River or Stream	Project Alternative	Species Present	Time-of-Year Restriction	
			Spring	Fall
Assonet River	Southern Triangle	Alewife American eel Blueback herring Rainbow smelt White perch Winter flounder Shellfish	Jan. 15 – Nov. 15	
Cedar Swamp River	Southern Triangle	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Cotley River	Southern Triangle	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Fall Brook	Southern Triangle	Alewife American eel Blueback herring White perch	March 15 – June 30	Sept. 1 – Nov. 15
Rattlesnake Brook	Southern Triangle	Alewife American eel Blueback herring Rainbow smelt White perch	March 1 – June 30	Sept. 1 – Nov. 15
Steep Brook	Southern Triangle	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Terry Brook	Southern Triangle	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Beaver Brook	Attleboro Stoughton Whittenton Rapid Bus	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Hodges Brook	Attleboro	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Neponset River	Attleboro	Alewife American eel American shad Atlantic tomcod Blueback herring Rainbow smelt White perch Winter flounder Shellfish	Feb. 15 – Nov. 15	
Three Mile River	Attleboro	Alewife Blueback herring White perch	April 1 – June 30	Sept. 1 – Nov. 15
Wading River	Attleboro	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Black Brook	Stoughton Whittenton	American eel	March 15 – June 30	
Mill River	Stoughton Whittenton	Alewife American eel Atlantic tomcod Blueback herring	Feb. 15 – June 30	Sept. 1 – Nov. 15



Pine Swamp Brook	Stoughton Whittenton	American eel	March 15 – June 30
Queset Brook	Stoughton Whittenton	American eel	March 15 – June 30
Taunton River	Stoughton Whittenton Rapid Bus	Alewife American eel American shad Atlantic sturgeon Atlantic tomcod Blueback herring Rainbow smelt Shellfish White perch Winter flounder	Jan. 15 – Nov. 15
Whitman Brook	Stoughton Whittenton	American eel	March 15 – June 30
Blue Hill River	Rapid Bus	American eel	March 15 – June 30
Dam Lot Brook	Rapid Bus	American eel	March 15 – June 30
Lovett Brook	Rapid Bus	American eel	March 15 – June 30
Town River	Rapid Bus	Alewife American eel Blueback herring	March 15 – June 30    Sept. 1 – Nov. 15

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Questions regarding this review may be directed to John Logan in our New Bedford office at (508) 990-2860 ext. 141.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Diodati  
Director

cc: Christopher Boelke, NMFS  
Ken Chin, DEP  
Robert Boeri, CZM  
Ed Reiner, EPA  
Richard Lehan, DFG  
John Sheppard, DMF  
Brad Chase, DMF  
Kathryn Ford, DMF  
Christian Petitpas, DMF

PD/jl/rl/sd



## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

May 2, 2011

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Jennifer McCarthy  
Chief, Regulatory Division  
New England District  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Attn: Alan Anacheke-Nasemann

RE: South Coast Rail Project, Southeastern Massachusetts. MHC #RC.15924. EEA#14346.  
**CE-NAE-2007-00698.**

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

Staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), office of the State Historic Preservation Officer, have reviewed your letter of April 4, 2011, and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR), for the project referenced above.

Project alternatives described in the DEIS/DEIR include the Attleboro, Stoughton and Whittenton Diesel and Electric rail alternatives and the Rapid Bus alternative. The Middleborough Alternative is no longer under consideration. The DEIS/DEIR, Preface Section P.4 indicates that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MADOT) has recommended the Stoughton alternatives, including diesel or electric rail service on the reactivated Stoughton line through the towns of Stoughton, Easton, Raynham and Taunton, as its preferred project alternative. The Corps proposes to evaluate multiple project alternatives to identify the Least Environmentally Damaging Practical Alternative.

The Corps has requested the MHC's concurrence with the completeness of identification efforts for known but not for as-yet-unidentified historic properties, and with the Corps' preliminary determinations of eligibility and effect. Preliminary determinations of National Register eligibility and effects to previously identified historic properties are presented in DEIS/DEIR Sections 1.5.8 and 4.8. Recommendations for additional cultural resources identification and evaluation efforts for the project alternatives are also included in Section 4.8, and are noted in your letter.

The Corps proposes to complete historic properties identification and evaluation efforts once a preferred alternative has been selected as a single corridor. The draft research design and methodology for intensive-level cultural resources survey for the preferred project alternative should be submitted to the MHC for review and comment.

The MHC prefers to comment on the results of the identification and evaluation efforts and the Corps's effect determinations after the cultural resource surveys have been completed for the preferred alternative.

L-012.01



Section 4.8.5 of the DEIS/DEIR generally summarizes proposed mitigation of impacts to cultural resources. Mitigation measures for specific project adverse effects, including noise, vibration, alteration of setting and demolition are discussed in Sections 4.8.5.3. Although avoidance and minimization are considered in Section 4.8.5.1 and .2, an adverse effect to significant historic properties is presumed for the project as a whole, and recommendations for the development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) are described on page 4.8-95.

The presumption of adverse effect and mitigation is premature at this stage of project planning when several project alternatives are still in consideration, and with the identification and evaluation efforts, and the consultation process, not yet completed. The Final EIS/EIR should describe the relationship of consultation under 36 CFR 800.6 to the development of appropriate measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to significant historic properties, to more closely track the regulatory process of 36 CFR 800.

L-012.02

MHC also notes that mapping of historical architectural resources identified in DEIS/DEIR Volume II figures 4.8-1 to 4.8-29 are derived from 2009 cultural resources identification efforts. Plans for track alignments, stations, layover facilities, track and electrical transmission infrastructure have been refined from the alternatives presented in the 2009 ENF (pg. 1-7). The currently proposed 2011 project alternatives are described in Section 1, and are shown in Section 4.5, 4.12 and 3.2 figures, including conceptual station and layover facilities impact areas and locations of traction power electrical transmission infrastructure. Project figures in the Final EIS/EIR should accurately present the preferred project alternative impact areas and their relationship to identified historical architectural resources.

L-012.03

These comments are provided to assist in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800). If you have any questions or require more information at this time, please write to Jonathan K. Patton at this office.

Sincerely,



Brona Simon  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Executive Director  
State Archaeologist  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

xc: Kathleen Atwood, USACOE-NED  
Anthony Guy Lopez, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
Bettina Washington, THPO, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)  
George Green Jr., THPO, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe  
John A. Peters, Jr. Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs  
A. Kenneth Alves, Assonet Band, Wampanoag Nation  
Kristina Egan, MADOT  
Andrew Brennan, MBTA  
Holly Palmgren, MBTA  
Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, EEA, Attn: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Unit  
Stephen C. Smith, SRPEDD  
Historical Commissions, Towns of: Quincy, Milton, Canton, Randolph, Braintree,  
Holbrook, Avon, Stoughton, Norwood, Needham, Sharon, Easton, Foxborough, Mansfield, Bridgewater, Brockton, West  
Bridgewater, Taunton, Berkley, Lakeville, Middleborough, Norton, Attleborough, Fall River, Freetown, New Bedford  
Deborah C. Cox, PAL  
Lisa A. Standley, VHB, Inc.



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 800, Boston, MA 02114-2136  
(617) 626-1200 FAX: (617) 626-1240

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard K. Sullivan Jr., Secretary, EEA  
ATTN: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Unit  
FROM: Bruce K. Carlisle, Acting Director, CZM  
DATE: May 27, 2011  
RE: EEA 14346, South Coast Rail Project DEIR/DEIS; New Bedford, Fall River, Freetown

The Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) has completed its review of the above-referenced Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (DEIR/DEIS), noticed in the *Environmental Monitor* dated March 23, 2011. While this project will have potential impacts to communities along the entire length of the proposed alternative routes from Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River to Boston, CZM has focused its comments on those sections that have the potential to impact coastal resources and coastal communities. The project proponent, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works (EOT), has submitted an application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The project will also require review and concurrence under CZM's Federal Consistency review process.

### Project Description

The DEIR/DEIS states "(T)he purpose of the South Coast Rail project is to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts and, to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities." The DEIR/DEIS provides information on the need for the project and eight evaluated alternatives as required by MEPA. These alternatives include a No-Build Alternative, a Rapid Bus Alternative, and both electric and diesel versions for three different rail alternatives. Early in the preparation of the DEIR/DEIS, the U.S. EPA requested that a hybrid alternative be evaluated. Although mentioned in the DEIR/DEIS, early evaluation quickly eliminated this as an alternative and it was not evaluated in detail.

L-092.01

CZM understands that all of the rail alternatives propose the same infrastructure in the "Southern Triangle" portion of the project which includes the coastal communities, and therefore will have similar potential resource impacts. The Rapid Bus Alternative has similar potential impacts to coastal resources, especially from the perspective of station location and development. Given the similarity of impacts to coastal resources from all the build alternatives, CZM does not expect coastal resource impacts should be a significant driver in the selection of the proposed alternative. Therefore, CZM's comments will only focus on those parts of the "Southern Triangle" portion of the project that are within the coastal zone and which could potentially have impacts to coastal resources.

The rail alternatives include five proposed rail stations and two layover facilities in the project's "Southern Triangle" and within the coastal zone. Several options are being considered for the layover facilities. The two rail stations in New Bedford located within the coastal zone include the Whale's Tooth Station and the State Pier Station. The State Pier Station was eliminated from consideration in the DEIR/DEIS. The two rail stations in Fall River located within the coastal





zone include the Battleship Cove station and the Davol Street station. The fifth and final station located with the coastal zone portion of the project is the South Main Street station (UStorage Site) in Freetown. Two potential sites are being considered for layover facilities in New Bedford. The Wamsutta Street Layover option is within the coastal zone, near the harbor and adjacent to the Whale's Tooth Station. The Church Street Layover option is outside the coastal zone and several miles from the harbor. Three potential sites are being considered for layover facilities in Fall River - the ISP Layover option, the Weaver's Cove West option, and the Weaver's Cove East option - are all located within the coastal zone. The actual rail route taken between this "Southern Triangle" segment of the project and Boston is mainly outside the coastal zone. It is likely to have little or no impact on coastal resources. A part of the proposed "Southern Triangle" goes through the coastal town of Berkley, but not within or near the coastal zone boundary.

## Project Comments

### *New Bedford Whale's Tooth Rail Station*

The Whale's Tooth station is the only rail station currently proposed for the New Bedford portion of the project that is within the coastal zone. While the proposed site is presently a paved parking lot, the construction of the rail station infrastructure and reconfiguration of the site present an opportunity to improve the site's stormwater infrastructure to both minimize stormwater runoff and to treat, to the maximum extent possible, the remaining runoff. Given the significant idling time that trains are likely to spend at this location, attention should be given to the potential non-point source pollutants that may come from these trains. This proposed rail station will share some existing rail infrastructure with ongoing and future commercial/industrial freight rail uses. This rail station is also located across Herman Melville Boulevard from the New Bedford/Fairhaven Designated Port Area (DPA) of the port. With this in mind, it is important that proposed rail station activities and associated uses be compatible with the working waterfront characteristics of the area and able to coexist with industrial port uses. CZM and the City of New Bedford have worked closely with the MA DOT to ensure that the proposed rail activities were consistent with the June 14, 2010 state-approved New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor Plan Update. This plan identifies the Whale's Tooth Parking Lot area as a future inter-modal transportation center, including commuter rail, freight rail, local and regional bus service, taxi and trolley service, and parking. As the future plans for this proposed rail station are developed in greater detail, it is necessary to regularly review the design details to ensure this compatibility is maintained. This compatibility concern is especially true for any future transit oriented development, particularly residential development that may be proposed as part of the project. CZM recommends that low-impact development techniques and practices be used, to the greatest extent possible, to reduce potential non-point source impacts.

L-092.02

### *New Bedford Overnight Train Layover Facility Site Options*

The Church Street Overnight Train Layover Facility site is outside the coastal zone and far from the harbor area. Therefore, this site can be assumed to have lower potential impacts on coastal resources and existing industrial port operations than the Wamsutta Overnight Train Layover Facility site, located adjacent to the proposed Whale's Tooth Rail Station and DPA uses. However, CZM recognizes that the Wamsutta site may have logistical, operational, or other characteristics that make it the preferred site over the Church Street location. If the Wamsutta site is selected for the overnight train layover facility, CZM recommends that attention be given to minimize non-point source pollutants from the layover facility and to, also, minimize any conflicts the layover facility might have with existing or potential future freight operations to and from the industrial port.

L-092.03

### *Fall River Rail Stations*

Two rail stations are proposed within Fall River, Battleship Cove and Fall River Depot. The Battleship Cove station is within the coastal zone. It is adjacent to the Mount Hope Bay DPA, near an area of marine industrial activities and aging mill buildings. The DEIR/DEIS states that this station is partially within the DPA. However, CZM recently clarified its DPA boundary in this area and the station site is no longer in the DPA. This station is proposed to be a seasonal station designed to service walk-in and pick-up/drop-off customers. The Fall River Depot Station is partially within the coastal zone in an urban area of residential and commercial activity. It will be a year-round station that includes extensive parking facilities. Both proposed stations are relatively near the coastal waters of Mount Hope Bay, and station designs should include infrastructure and strategies to minimize stormwater runoff and to treat to the maximum extent possible the remaining stormwater runoff. Attention should also be given to the potential non-point source pollutants that may come from idling trains at the stations. Both proposed rail station will share a portion of the existing rail infrastructure that runs into the industrially developed portion of the waterfront. CZM recommends that accommodations be made to maintain any existing or potential future industrial/commercial freight rail activities that support the industrialized portion of the port. The Fall River Depot station is separated from the waterfront by several busy roadways. The city's harbor planning process from the late 1990's expressed a desire to allow a more pedestrian friendly access and reconnection to the waterfront from this area, and proposed a long-term strategy to reduce area traffic.

L-092.04

### *Fall River Overnight Train Layover Facility Site Options*

The three proposed Fall River layover facilities are with the coastal zone, near the waters of Mount Hope Bay/Taunton River. While no layover facility is proposed within a FEMA Velocity Zone, a small portion of the Weaver's Cove West Layover Facility is within the FEMA Zone A 100 year floodplain. CZM recommends that the train layover facility selected be located outside of the FEMA Zone A. Given the projected sea-level rise and the long-term nature of this rail infrastructure, CZM also suggests that the proponent consider including a margin of safety to avoid a layover facility being located in a future elevated Zone A. Finally, CZM recommends that attention be given to minimizing non-point source pollutants from the layover facility as oils and grease that may accumulate from the layover and idling of multiple trains.

L-092.05

### *Freetown South Main Street Rail Station*

While the access road to the proposed South Main Street Rail station is within the coastal zone, the rail station itself is located just outside the coastal zone. As such, it is not likely to have significant impacts on coastal resources of the Taunton River. However, CZM recommends that non-point pollution from increased impervious areas be treated to the greatest degree possible, including Low-Impact Development techniques to reduce impervious areas where possible.

L-092.06

### *Coastal Zone and Chapter 91*

CZM's review of Section 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, of the DEIR/DEIS, raised the following comments and suggestions. The DEIR/DEIS states that future public access to the shoreline may be restricted following construction of a layover facility at any of the three potential layover sites being considered in Fall River. CZM notes that mitigation for the lost public access may be required. The DEIR/DEIS also states that the Fall River Weaver's Cove West Layover Facility Site would likely need to be licensed under Chapter 91 as a temporary use. CZM recommends that the proponent investigate the potential for this facility to qualify for licensing as an accessory to water dependent industrial uses under 310 CMR 9.12(3). This approach to licensing

L-092.07



would allow a longer license term than the 10 year license limit for a temporary use in a DPA. CZM recommends that the project proponent discuss these issues and options with DEP to receive a more definitive determination. | L-092.07

*Air Quality Impacts to Coastal Waters*

The scientific understanding of the role of atmospheric nitrogen compounds, such as NO<sub>x</sub>, on the water quality of coastal embayments has improved in recent years. While the DEIR/DEIS included an air quality study, it did not explicitly discuss whether the various route alternatives, or the electric vs. diesel alternatives had any significant disadvantages or advantages from a nitrogen deposition perspective. CZM recommends that subsequent review documents address the nitrogen deposition to coastal embayments more explicitly. | L-092.08

**Federal Consistency Review**

The proposed project is subject to CZM federal consistency review, which requires that the project be found to be consistent with CZM's enforceable program policies. For further information on this process, please contact Bob Boeri, Project Review Coordinator, at 617-626-1050 or visit the CZM web site at [www.mass.gov/czm](http://www.mass.gov/czm). | L-092.09

BKC/dsj,dd,rlb

cc: Mayor Scott W. Lang, New Bedford  
Mayor William A. Flanagan, Fall River  
Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Manager  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation  
David Johnston, Acting Regional Director  
Southeast Regional Office, MA DEP  
Liz Kouloheras  
Southeast Regional Office, MA DEP  
Karen Adams, Chief,  
Regulatory Branch, NED, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Kristin Decas, Executive Director,  
New Bedford Harbor Development Commission  
P.O. Box 50899, New Bedford, MA 02745  
Paul Dipietro, Section Head, Water Resources  
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Kevin Mooney, Design Engineer, Waterways  
Hingham Office, MA DCR

# Regional/Regional Planning Organizations

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# Old Colony Planning Council



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April 27, 2011

Mr. Alan R. Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
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696 Virginia Road  
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Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
Attn: MEPA Office  
[Aisling O'Shea], EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

MAY 4'11 REG DIV

Re: EEA #14346: South Coast Rail Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR)

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) is currently reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) submitted for the South Coast Rail Project (EEA #14346), which was released on March 23, 2011. As you are aware, the document is over 2,500 pages in length and contains an abundance of information related to the proposed project and associated benefits and impacts.

I realize that the public forums scheduled for the first week of May will provide an opportunity to become more familiar with the proposed project and to provide testimony; however, the fact remains that a 2,500 page document needs to be read, digested, and discussed, in order to fully comprehend the complexities of the proposed project.

At our most recent Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meeting, it was voted unanimously to seek an extension of the public comment period. This project has far reaching benefits and impacts and therefore, it would be appropriate and reasonable that a project of this magnitude would have a lengthy public participation component and comment period.

L-007.01

I thank you for your consideration of this request and the opportunity to comment on this project to ensure that it accomplishes its objectives with minimal environmental impacts. L-007.01

Sincerely,



Pat Ciaramella  
Executive Director

cc: OCPC Delegates and Alternates  
Federal and State Legislators  
OCPC Region Chairs, Chief Elected Officials  
OCPC Region Chairs, Planning Boards  
Mr. Jeffrey Mullan, Secretary and CEO, MassDOT  
Mr. Francis DePaola, P.E., Acting Highway Division Administrator, MassDOT  
Mr. Richard Davey, Rail and Transit Division Administrator, MassDOT  
Mr. Bernard McCourt, Director, MassDOT District 5  
Mr. Lionel Lucien, Public/Private Development Unit, MassDOT  
Mr. Andrew Lehmann, MPO Liaison, MassDOT Planning  
Mr. Reinald Ledoux, Jr., Administrator, BAT  
Mr. Frank Gay, Administrator, GATRA  
Mr. Joseph Cosentino, Administrator, SRTA  
Mr. John Bullard, Chairman, Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force  
Mr. Paul Maloney, P.E., Metropolitan Planner, FHWA  
Ms. Mary Beth Mello, Region 1 Regional Administrator, FTA  
Mr. Joseph Szabo, Administrator, FRA  
Mr. Curt Spalding, Region 1 Regional Administrator, EPA



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May 27, 2011

Mr. Alan R. Anacheke-Nasemann  
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Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
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[Aisling O'Shea], EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: EEA #14346: South Coast Rail Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/DEIR)

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/DEIR) submitted for the South Coast Rail Project (EEA #14346). The proposed transportation project is a Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) initiative to bring public transportation to the South Coast region of the Commonwealth. MassDOT's stated purpose is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities." The DEIS/DEIR document included an examination of the benefits and impacts related to each of the alternatives which were studied as part of the proposed project. I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed project and offer the following for your consideration.

## Planning Consistency

Overall, the proposed project is consistent with the major planning efforts and documents of the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC). Specifically, the Old Colony Planning Council Regional Policy Plan encourages the creation of concentrated, mixed use developments; expanded housing opportunities; the preservation of open space; the provision of transportation choice; all of which have the potential to increase the number of jobs and business opportunities. In addition, the Regional Policy Plan

L-070.01



supports projects which promote the use of public transportation rather than the Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV). This proposed project has the potential to provide the host communities with various smart growth opportunities, and therefore, is consistent with the planning objectives of Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC). The Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan which was produced to enhance the aforementioned opportunities provides a potential framework for partnership between the host communities and the proponent far into the future of the proposed project. As such, I strongly encourage the Commonwealth to continue supporting the host communities as well as the entire South Coast Region as the project impacts have been identified to be far reaching.

L-070.01

The Old Colony MPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identifies the need of passenger rail service to the South Coast Region as well as to the Cape Cod Region. The restored commuter rail service on the Old Colony Lines has provided the connection to Boston for the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts and the resulting economic development is clear in some communities. However, in other communities, the experience has been less robust. Therefore, I caution and strongly urge the proponent to work closely with the communities of the South Coast Region in order to be responsive to their individual needs, desires, and concerns.

L-070.02

#### Public Participation

In order to ensure an effective and open public participation process, MassDOT implemented a comprehensive community involvement process, which included an Interagency Coordinating Group; the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force; a civic engagement process; and an extensive project website. This public participation model was widely successful in identifying and addressing issues related to the proposed project before the release of the DEIS/DEIR document. Following the DEIS/DEIR release, MassDOT provided a memorandum that helped the reader understand the components of the document; however, I felt as though MassDOT could have done more in terms of helping host communities understand the potential impacts related to the proposed project. Considering that the FEIS/FEIR document might be the first chance that the host communities have the opportunity to review a Least Environmentally Damaging and Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), it seems reasonable that there be an extensive public outreach campaign in those communities following release of the LEDPA as well as an extended public comment period to allow for all aspects related to final design and mitigation to be identified and sufficiently resolved.

L-070.03

On April 27, 2011, Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) sent a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office asking for an extension on the public comment period. This request was sent in order to support our member communities with their review of this important document. As you are most certainly aware, the DEIS/DEIR document was released for public review during a very busy time of year for communities of the Commonwealth. The spring of every year is when the communities of the Commonwealth typically plan for town meetings and town departments are very busy determining budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. This 2,500 page document included a multitude of chapters containing technical information related to the impacts associated with the proposed project and the public was given sixty-five (65) days to review, comprehend, and provide comment.

L-070.04



This put a great deal of pressure on host communities to conduct a comprehensive review of the 2,500 page document while making plans to address their upcoming fiscal year. In addition, the size of the document also made it difficult for those people of the Commonwealth, for whom, English may not be their primary language. Reading a document of that size and complexity is challenging for those who work in the planning, engineering, environmental, or transportation related fields and I suspect even harder for those who do not. Therefore, I strongly urge the proponent to consider an elongated comment period for the FEIS/FEIR, a thorough explanation of the complexity of the review process, as well as public meetings held in the host communities in order to fully engage those most closely affected by the proposed project. It is our conclusion that this sixty-five day period was insufficient and our hope is that when the FEIS/FEIR is released, more consideration is given to extending the comment period and a more robust outreach component.

L-070.04

### Alternatives Analysis

The DEIS/DEIR document provided extensive examinations of eight (8) alternatives for the proposed project. The alternatives included in the DEIS/DEIR document included: 1.) No-Build (Enhanced Bus) 2.) Attleboro Electric 3.) Attleboro Diesel 4.) Stoughton Electric 5.) Stoughton Diesel 6.) Whittenton Electric 7.) Whittenton Diesel and 8.) Rapid Bus. All of the alternatives were analyzed and descriptions of the benefits and impacts of each were included in the DEIS/DEIR. As required by the MEPA regulations, MassDOT selected the Stoughton family as the preferred alternative, thereby requesting that it be moved forward for in-depth analysis in the FEIS/FEIR document. OCPC encountered many residents and stakeholders whom did not fully comprehend the joint environmental review process and misunderstood the ramifications of such a selection. I recognize that MassDOT has made efforts to demonstrate the differences in the environmental review processes; however, I believe that more clarity on the subject would go a long way. As such, I strongly urge the proponent and the Army Corps of Engineers to continue to provide the public with documentation as well as public participation events in order to fully educate them as to the roles, responsibilities, timelines, and functions of the joint environmental review process.

L-070.05

### Safety and Security

#### *Grade Crossings*

Grade crossings are important factors when dealing with the interactions of railroads and roadways. According to the DEIS/DEIR, there are numerous grade crossings along each of the alternatives, which have the potential to create conflicts between trains and vehicles and/or people. Since the Old Colony Line restoration (1997), there have been several accidents at grade crossings along the individual corridors. In addition, some communities benefit from quad-gates while others only have two gates which stop vehicles and people from crossing the tracks when a train is approaching or traveling through. I support the use of the Automatic Highway Crossing Warning (AHCW) Systems as mentioned in the DEIS/DEIR. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be consistency when it comes to what type of gates have been used on the Old Colony Lines, and therefore, I strongly urge the proponent to consider the use of quad-gates throughout the corridor to ensure the highest level of

L-070.06



safety for the traveling public. In addition, I recommend that the proponent work closely with the abutters along the selected route to identify areas where crossings may be an issue and to mitigate their concerns. L-070.06

#### *Right-of-Way (ROW)*

The Right-of-Way for the proposed project is of utmost concern to the towns of Easton and Stoughton. These communities are concerned with the following items as they relate to the proposed project: access, proper maintenance, safety, and security. The FEIS/FEIR should demonstrate who will be provided access to the ROW; where that access will exist; safety measures that will be in place to ensure that the integrity of the rail remains intact; security plans that identify whom will have authority of the ROW and how it will be protected; and lastly, maintenance plans which demonstrate how the proponent will be ensuring that aspects related but not limited to, drainage, structural integrity, and overall conditions of the ROW will be taken into account. L-070.07

In addition, the project proponent should include detail regarding how existing utilities will be impacted and mitigated as part of the construction of the proposed project.

#### *Emergency Response*

According to the DEIS/DEIR, MassDOT has chosen the Stoughton family of alternatives (electric & diesel) which would extend the existing rail from the Stoughton station to Fall River and New Bedford. This alternative route presents challenges related to emergency response in that a substantial portion of the route will be in the Hockomock Swamp. As the Hockomock Swamp is considered an ACEC, impacts related to construction and operations must be minimized to the greatest extent possible; however, the DEIS/DEIR did not address how emergency response personnel will be able to access a possible accident should it occur in the swamp. As such, I strongly urge the proponent to include such information in the FEIS/FEIR filing and further identify potential access points along the proposed corridor. L-070.08

In addition, emergency response vehicles would need to respond to accidents should they occur within their communities. This proposed project presents challenges to the emergency response personnel in that should the train be blocking the roadway and thus, not allowing access to another part of a community, those personnel will not be able to respond to a call in a timely fashion. As such, I strongly recommend that the proponent work closely with the first responders of the host communities to properly and sufficiently describe how those situations will be avoided in the FEIS/FEIR. L-070.09



## Environmental Impacts

### *Wetlands*

The Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), at 16,950 acres, is the largest vegetated wetland system in Massachusetts. If the Stoughton Alternative is selected there will be a variety of impacts within the Hockomock Swamp, which is a concern. One concern raised by the Town of Easton is ability to access the rail line within the Hockomock Swamp in case of an emergency or for routine maintenance. The DEIS/DEIR does not mention how emergency crews will be able to access the rail line in case of an emergency. If emergency access roads are created that could potentially add another level of impact to the Hockomock Swamp. Additional concerns from the Town of Easton are the potential archeological sites within the Swamp that date back 9,000 years, as it was a place of significance to the Wampanoag Native American Tribe. The project proponent should look at conducting pre-construction studies to if any archeological sites will be disrupted because of the rail line.

L-070.10

### *Wildlife*

According to the DEIS/DEIR, if the Stoughton alternative is chosen, it would have the least amount of environmental impact, but the fact remains it still travels through the Hockomock Swamp, a state designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) as well as the Pine Swamp in Raynham. The Town of Easton is concerned with wildlife crossing the track, not only within the ACEC and Pine Swamp, but also through other heavily vegetated areas, where animals, especially deer may cross the track. Deer crossing could lead to deer being hit by a train or causing an accident. This situation may be mitigated with the installation of fencing throughout the Hockomock and Pine Swamps as well as any area populated by deer. In an effort to mitigate impacts on the 13 rare and endangered species within the Hockomock Swamp the project proponent should look at conducting pre-construction studies to determine population size, distribution, or usage of the rail bed in an effort to finalize mitigation measures. The Town of Stoughton also had concerns with the proposed rail being adjacent to the Charles W. Welch Memorial Fish and Game Preserve, which is directly off of Route 138. I urge the proponent to work closely with the potential host communities to address their concerns related to wildlife areas in and around the selected route and provide suitable mitigation.

L-070.11

### *Water*

The Town of Easton has a number of water concerns with the proposed Stoughton alternative going through Easton, particularly the impact on the water supply within the community. All of Easton's water comes from wells within the ground and there is a particular concern with the well located off Gary Lane in Easton. The rail bed is directly adjacent to the well and the Town is concerned with pollutants from the train seeping into the ground and affecting the quality of drinking water as well as maintenance concerns at the pumping station from this particular well. I request that the proponent work closely with the potential host communities in an effort to identify water resource issues and properly mitigate the effects of the proposed project on those areas.

L-070.12



## Quality of Life

### *Visual*

The most prominent visual concern is the construction of an overhead catenary system if the electric option is chosen. The presence of a catenary system, while more energy efficient, may be considered clutter and/ or a visual detriment to the communities, as a majority of the lines transverse residential, commercial and forested areas. As such, a hybrid option which would use the overhead catenary system in outlying areas and diesel-electric in design-sensitive urban areas should be analyzed in order to be responsive to the concerns of the potential host communities. The DEIS/DEIR states that the visual impact to the proposed Easton Village station would be substantial due to the construction of train station and clearing of vegetation if the Stoughton Alternative (diesel or electric is chosen). The proposed Easton Village and existing Stoughton stations are examples of locations where substantial visual impacts would occur and have the potential to adversely impact the potential host communities. Therefore, I strongly advise the project proponent to work closely with all of the potential host communities to address these concerns regarding the visual impacts related to the overhead catenary systems.

L-070.13

### *Cultural Resources*

The DEIS/DEIR defines cultural resources as archeological sites as well as historic buildings, structures and districts. There are a number of these cultural resources in close vicinity to the proposed rail line. Some of the more prominent cultural resources that are of concern include the Stoughton Train Station building. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the station has been closed and boarded up since 2009. I strongly encourage the proponent to work with the Town to restore the station to make it become a centerpiece of the Stoughton's downtown area. The station could serve multiple purposes including housing a ticket booth and coffee shop, but more importantly as a shelter to protect people who are waiting for the train from inclement weather. The Town of Easton also had concerns with a number of cultural resources, namely the North Easton Historic District, which is a National Historic Landmark District adjacent to the proposed Easton Village Station. The North Easton Historic District houses a number of architecturally and historically significant buildings which should be preserved regardless of what alternative is chosen. Another cultural resource within the Town of Easton is the Hockomock Swamp; as it is a place of potential cultural significance for the Wampanoag Native American Tribe and it should be studied further to determine the extent of the archeological significance of the site.

L-070.14

These cultural resources have the potential to be impacted in some capacity, either visually impacted or by noise and vibration, but I strongly encourage the project proponent to address the concerns posed by the communities of Easton and Stoughton about these cultural resources within their communities.



## *Sound*

There are a number of concerns as to what the sound impacts will be along the proposed commuter rail line. According to the DEIS/DEIR, the Town of Easton will be the second most affected community in the report in terms of moderate and severe noise impacts. One of the more prominent concerns is the noise impact occurring from the locomotive warning horns, especially during early morning hours. Additional concerns include the locomotive and rail car noise when passing structures within close proximity of the rail line. The Town of Easton noted that noise impacts would be most severe at the proposed Easton Village Station, as that station is situated in a densely developed residential neighborhood. I strongly advise the project proponent to work with the Town of Easton to address these concerns regarding the increased noise level through a variety of mitigation measures including the installation of four quadrant gates where appropriate to reduce the need of locomotive warning horns, as well as the use of noise barriers and noise insulation in and around structures as needed.

L-070.15

## *Vibration*

According to the DEIS/DEIR there are approximately 29 residences in the communities of Easton and Stoughton that would be impacted by vibration levels that range from 80-86 VdB, which is above the annoyance criteria of 80VdB set by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These vibration impacts could be possibly mitigated with the installation of rubber ballast mats, which could reduce the vibration impacts from 3-10 VdB. Even with the installation of the rubber ballast mats, some residences may still be above the FTA annoyance limit of 80 VdB. Additional mitigation measures should be examined to address any residence impacted above the 80 VdB annoyance threshold. The Town of Easton has an additional concern about the potential effects of vibrations, particularly on the Historic Train Station, which is currently the home of the Easton Historical Society. While the DEIS/DEIR states that station is below the 100 VdB threshold for damage to fragile and historic structures, the Town is concerned with the effects of vibrations from the commuter rail on the station over the approximate 100 year life span of the project. I strongly advise the project proponent to conduct a baseline assessment of existing historic structures located on the selected route area to determine vibration impacts.

L-070.16

## *Land Use*

In regards to land use issues, the Town of Easton has expressed concern about the Stoughton Alternative passing through the Southeastern Regional Vocation High School complex, specifically a number of sports fields that would need to be relocated. I encourage the project proponent to work with the Town of Easton and school officials to come up with a plan to relocate these fields to another location around the school complex. In addition, the town of Stoughton has substantial concerns related to the impact that the proposed project will have on the downtown area. Currently, the rail spur terminates just south of the downtown and the historic rail station is closed and not functioning as a shelter for patrons of the commuter rail system. The issues related to potential land uses in and around the potential rail line are items that I urge the proponent to continue to work closely with the potential host communities in order to ensure that the proposed project provides for positive economic development opportunities.

L-070.17



## Transportation

### *Traffic*

According to the DEIR/DEIS document, the traffic impacts related to the proposed project are based on ridership forecasts. The transportation section of the DEIS/DEIR outlined the methodology used to analyze the impacts related to the proposed projects that included, but were not limited to: safety, grade crossings, gate closures, vehicle volumes, public transportation, parking, and traffic queuing. Unfortunately, it is noted that the Brockton Area Transit (BAT) was omitted from the discussion of bus service in the study area. Importantly, BAT provides bus service that extends into the towns of Easton and Stoughton, which are potential host communities, should the Stoughton route be ultimately selected. Therefore, I urge the proponent to include BAT in all discussions related to bus service and consult with them related to potential service enhancements.

L-070.18

The transportation section of the DEIS/DEIR presented findings for all of the proposed alternatives and provided a good baseline conditions analysis that should be included in the FEIS/FEIR document. The FEIS/FEIR should also include a more detailed analysis of transportation impacts related to the selected route which would include all aspects analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR. In addition, the FEIS/FEIR should include detailed site plans that include the following; but not limited to: trip distribution assignments, potential parking areas, intersection LOS, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Overall, the transportation section of the DEIS/DEIR was informative; however, without a selected route, it was difficult to assess the potential impacts as the section did not provide a detailed impact study for each potential station location. As such, I strongly urge the proponent to continue to work with the host communities and to provide public involvement opportunities once an alternative is chosen in order to ensure that all aspects related to transportation impacts are identified and properly mitigated.

L-070.19

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations*

Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are essential to the success of the smart growth potential of the proposed project. The DEIS/DEIR discussed potential improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians; however, lacked specific plans related to the design and implementation of those improvements. As such, the FEIS/FEIR should include bicycle and pedestrian circulation site plans, which should include, but not be limited to: conceptual station site sidewalk locations; crosswalk locations, and bicycle lanes and secure storage areas in order to ensure that the project provides for safe and realistic bicycle and pedestrian travel.

L-070.20

### *Public Transportation*

Future public transportation connections are an important component for this proposed transportation project. Large public transportation vehicles are harder to maneuver, require more space, operate on their own schedule, and therefore, require different provisions than a passenger motor vehicle. As such, the local Regional Transit Authorities (Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT), Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA), and Southeastern Regional Transit

L-070.21



Authority (SRTA)) must be involved in the station and conceptual design discussions and the fixed route interconnectivity analyses and planning. This effort should include all three (3) transit providers as their individual service areas continue to expand.

In addition, private transportation providers such as Plymouth & Brockton and Bloom also provide valuable commuter services and therefore, should also be considered in these discussions, analyses and planning efforts. Transit services should be designed and funded, if feasible, for the areas in order to support the usage of the proposed project. In addition, innovative services connecting the proposed stations to the points of interest in the local communities should also be included, while encouraging local employers near proposed stations to partner with the MassRIDES program to promote ridesharing and carpooling.

L-070.21

### *Parking*

In recent years, OCPC has documented a steady decrease in the parking demand for the commuter rail lots along the Old Colony Lines. This decreasing trend could be attributed to a variety of factors, such as; high unemployment, an increase in carpooling or drop-offs, and/ or more people choosing to drive to work instead of using public transportation. Clearly, without in-depth analyses, the list of possibilities remain on the table; however, one item that OCPC has documented is the increase in number of private parking lots in close proximity to the existing commuter rail lots providing cheaper rates for patrons of the commuter rail system. As such, I recommend that the proponent work closely with the host communities and the surrounding business owners in order to avoid the trends currently happening on the Old Colony Lines.

L-070.22

### *Ridership*

The DEIS/DEIR included information related to expected ridership for the different alternatives; however, the numbers are based on 2007 Regional Transportation Plans information and therefore, the FEIS/FEIR should include updated ridership numbers reflecting forecasts included in the most recent plans currently under development and to be finalized later this summer. In addition, I encourage the proponent to include a section outlining the effect of declining ridership due to potential poor on-time performance of the proposed project.

L-070.23

### Conclusions

I have concerns related to the environmental review of the proposed project. Although the idea of a streamlined review is a good one, there also exists potential to create confusion and skepticism related to the proposed project. I strongly urge to the project proponent to consider an extensive public participation outreach campaign and extended comment period following the release of the FEIS/FEIR.

L-070.24

I thank you for your consideration of this request and the opportunity to comment on this project to ensure that it accomplishes its objectives with minimal environmental impacts.

Sincerely,



Pat Ciaramella  
Executive Director

cc: Federal and State Legislators  
OCPC Region Chairs, Chief Elected Officials  
OCPC Region Chairs, Planning Boards  
OCPC Delegates and Alternates  
Mr. Jeffrey Mullan, Secretary and CEO, MassDOT  
Mr. Francis DePaola, P.E., Acting Highway Division Administrator, MassDOT  
Mr. Richard Davey, Rail and Transit Division Administrator, MassDOT  
Ms. Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Project Director, MassDOT  
Mr. Bernard McCourt, Director, MassDOT District 5  
Mr. Lionel Lucien, Public/Private Development Unit, MassDOT  
Mr. Andrew Lehmann, MPO Liaison, MassDOT Planning  
Mr. Reinald Ledoux, Jr., Administrator, BAT  
Mr. Frank Gay, Administrator, GATRA  
Mr. Joseph Cosentino, Administrator, SRTA  
Mr. John Bullard, Chairman, Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force  
Mr. Paul Maloney, P.E., Metropolitan Planner, FHWA  
Ms. Mary Beth Mello, Region 1 Regional Administrator, FTA  
Mr. Joseph Szabo, Administrator, FRA  
Mr. Curt Spalding, Region 1 Regional Administrator, EPA





*Smart Growth & Regional Collaboration*

May 27, 2011

Richard K. Sullivan, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, MEPA #14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR #14346

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) regularly reviews proposals deemed to have regional impacts. The Council reviews projects for consistency with *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area; MAPC's Smart Growth Principles; the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles; as well as impacts upon the environment. MAPC has reviewed the above referenced Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR), which is undergoing concurrent state and federal review, and offers the following comments on the South Coast Rail Project.

MAPC's overall comments on the DEIS/DEIR are highlighted in this letter, and more detailed comments on the project are presented in the attached summary of comments.

The South Coast Rail Project is an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to bring public transportation to the South Coast region, connecting Boston to the cities of Fall River and New Bedford via commuter rail. The stated goals of the project are increased transit access and ridership, more equitable distribution of transit services, improved regional air quality, action against climate change, and support of opportunities for smart growth and sustainable development, particularly through transit-oriented development in and around new station locations.

The DEIS/DEIR evaluated five alternatives:

- No-Build (Enhanced Bus)
- Attleboro Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)
- Stoughton Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)
- Whittenton Alternatives (Electric and Diesel)
- Rapid Bus

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Jay Ash, *President* • Michelle Ciccolo, *Vice-President* • Marilyn Contreas, *Secretary* • Grace S. Shepard, *Treasurer* • Marc Draisen, *Executive Dire*

To facilitate review of the South Coast Rail Project under MEPA and inform the scope of study necessary for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), MassDOT is required by the MEPA office to identify a preferred corridor in the state portion (DEIR) of the joint DEIS/DEIR. In the Preface to the DEIS/DEIR, MassDOT has identified the Stoughton family of alternatives as the Commonwealth's preferred corridor for the South Coast Rail Project. A preferred mode for the Stoughton family of alternatives remains to be specified.

L-093.01

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) concurs with MassDOT's recommendation. Based on the DEIS/DEIR's findings, the Stoughton Electric Alternative meets all project purpose measures to the greatest degree, followed closely by the Stoughton Diesel Alternative. However, it is important to note that achieving the greatest benefits and least environmental impacts of this project will require implementation of the "high" smart growth scenario outlined in the DEIS/DEIR and based on the findings of the South Coast Rail Economic and Land Use Corridor Plan.<sup>1</sup>

As required by the USEPA's Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines, the Army Corps of Engineers will determine the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) after receiving public comment on the DEIS/DEIR. MAPC looks forward to a continued transparent review process in which a preferred alternative is selected in the next phase of EIS/EIR review.

L-093.02

The Stoughton Alternatives would provide commuter rail service to South Station using the Northeast Corridor, Stoughton Line, New Bedford Main Line, and Fall River Secondary. From New Bedford to Boston, the distance is 54.9 miles and it is 52.4 miles from Fall River to Boston. At a cost of \$1.88 billion, the Stoughton Electric Alternative is forecast to add 9,580 new daily riders. The Stoughton Diesel Alternative would add 8,140 new riders and cost \$1.48 billion. At 74.5 minutes, the Stoughton Electric Alternative has a faster travel time compared to the Stoughton Diesel Alternative which is 84 minutes. Both alternatives are forecast to significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 296,000 and 229,000 for the Electric and Diesel Alternatives respectively.

MAPC is generally supportive of the South Coast Rail project. The Fall River-New Bedford area is currently the only major urban area in eastern Massachusetts not served by commuter rail. The South Coast area is densely developed, but also has extensive under-realized commercial, industrial, and housing opportunities. Expansion of the commuter rail to this area will improve residents' access to jobs and services, while providing a more affordable housing supply to employees of Metro Boston, and improve the viability of industrial and commercial enterprises in Metro Boston, in the South Coast cities, and at station locations along the line. Expanded transit service to developed urban areas is essential to the health and growth of the Commonwealth and is a core element of MAPC's *MetroFuture* Plan.

L-093.03

<sup>1</sup> Completed by MassDOT, June 2009. Also referred to as the Smart Growth Corridor Plan.



MAPC is pleased that a comprehensive economic development and land use corridor plan, the Smart Growth Corridor Plan, was undertaken before making a major transportation investment such as the South Coast Rail project. We feel a similar corridor planning process should be undertaken in all areas where major investments are planned or will be needed as a result of anticipated development. The Smart Growth Corridor Plan establishes a foundation for a comprehensive process to implement sustainable land use and development patterns along the rail corridor.

In order to ensure that project benefits are maximized and any negative impacts are minimized and mitigated, the following attachment summarizes the issues that need to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR in greater detail. The key areas of concern include: developing and implementing a Finance Plan, impacts on South Station, construction impacts to commuter rail and freight service, and developing and implementing a Parking Plan.

L-093.04

Many of the issues raised in this letter were previously addressed in MAPC's comment letter addressing the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and in the Secretary's Certificate on the Environmental Notification Form for the South Coast Rail Project.<sup>2,3</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

Sincerely,



Marc D. Draisen  
Executive Director

cc:

Thomas Tinlin, City of Boston  
William Friel, Town of Canton  
Andrew A. Gala Jr., Town of Foxborough  
Kristina Egan, MassDOT  
Pat Ciaramella, OCPC  
Benjamin E. Puritz, Town of Sharon  
Francis T. Crimmins, Jr., Town of Stoughton  
Taber Keally, Chairman, Three Rivers Interlocal Council  
Steven Smith, SRPEDD

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Marc D. Draisen, MAPC Executive Director, to former Secretary Ian A. Bowles, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, January 9, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Certificate of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs on the Environmental Notification Form, April 3, 2009.

South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346  
MAPC's Detailed Comments

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### Finance Plan

Developing a finance plan is a critical component to implementing a successful project. A detailed finance plan that includes the potential to share costs with potential partners (i.e., Amtrak, MBTA, Mass Coastal, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and CSX) needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR. The FEIS/FEIR should include a comprehensive exploration of potential cost savings and improved services through these types of partnerships. If the proponent hasn't done so already, MAPC recommends pursuing funding opportunities that may be available through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

L-093.05

MAPC suggests that the Secretary require the DEIS/DEIR also include information on the following five items, all of which are related to the pace and financing of the development of South Coast Rail:

1. **Contributions by owners and developers.** To what degree, in what ways, and at what times will owners and developers along the route contribute to the costs of the project, either through repayment of bonds or other financing mechanisms? What form will these repayments take, e.g., District Improvement Financing (DIF)?
2. **Project phasing.** Would it be possible to phase implementation of the project, such as sequential completion of lines south of Boston, eventually reaching both Fall River and New Bedford? Phasing should not indicate a lack of commitment to the full project, but it may make accomplishment of this expensive project more practicable in a period of federal retrenchment from public transit.
3. **Interim steps to improve mobility.** What mechanisms could be employed to improve transit service to some of the destinations along the route in the short-term, through mechanisms others than commuter rail expansion? Improvement of bus service accompanied by multi-modal facilities along the route could provide a measurable improvement in service in the shorter term, at less cost than the entire project. We are pleased that the Smart Growth Corridor Plan already calls for the development of multi-modal centers at key sites along the line, and we are also pleased that MassDOT is engaged in conversations with the Southeast Regional Transit Authority (SERTA) regarding multi-modal options in the vicinity of the Whale's Tooth station in New Bedford. Advancing some of these elements more quickly could help to catalyze development while improving regional mobility even before the new line goes into effect. Again, these recommendations are made not out of any desire to delay the project or to truncate its full completion, but rather to ensure that residents receive a measurable level of service improvement speedily.
4. **Electric v. diesel alternative.** While MAPC is eager to move the commuter rail system to electric power as soon as possible, there may be financial implications to the choice. These factors could have a bearing on the feasibility of the project.

L-093.06

L-093.07

L-093.08

L-093.09



**South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346  
MAPC's Comments**

Therefore, the financing plan should compare the financial implications of the two alternatives. If the electric alternative is chosen, a clear way of financing it should be outlined. If the diesel alternative is chosen, a long-term plan to move to electric should be provided.

L-093.09

5. **State of Good Repair.** Once complete, the South Coast Rail project needs to remain in a State of Good Repair, a critical component for providing safe and reliable service for riders in addition to providing a foundation for future growth. State of Good Repair programs include promoting system maintenance and implementing innovative financing strategies. Please outline plans for the State of Good Repair in your FEIS/FEIR.

L-093.10

Impacts at South Station

Although the majority of the project's new stations and track will be built outside of the MAPC region, we are concerned about the impacts that construction and new service will have on the existing rail system within the region. The FEIS/FEIR needs to evaluate the Stoughton Alternatives' construction and operation impacts to South Station, even though we understand that the Stoughton Alternatives will only add four new trains per day.

L-093.11

Commuter rail service at South Station is currently restricted by the number of tracks that can be placed within its existing footprint. Independent of the South Coast Rail project, MassDOT is undertaking a project to construct seven new terminal tracks at South Station to accommodate existing and projected future demand for commuter rail service. MAPC understands that the new terminal tracks will be constructed prior to the operation of the South Coast Rail project, and we would like that commitment to be confirmed by the Secretary in the FEIS/FEIR, based upon commitment from MassDOT. What is the anticipated completion date for the new terminal tracks and what measures are being taken to ensure that both projects are coordinated? How will the addition of seven new terminal tracks at South Station affect existing service along the Stoughton Line?

L-093.12

According to the DEIS/DEIR, train frequency from Canton Junction station to Stoughton station along the existing MBTA Stoughton Commuter Rail Line alignment ranges from 17 roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. The FEIS/FEIR needs to summarize the number of existing and forecasted freight and passenger trips during the weekday and weekends. Specific attention to the number of existing and future passenger trips at South Station needs to be included.

L-093.13

South Station Air Rights, a significant development project above South Station, proposes 1.375 million square feet of office space, 170,000 square feet of residential space, 200 hotel rooms, and over 930 parking spaces. The FEIS/FEIR should explain specifically how the construction of this project, which has already been approved by the Board of Directors of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, affects South Coast Rail and adding track space at South Station. The FEIS/FEIR should also provide an update as the

L-093.14

## South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346 MAPC's Comments

practicality and likely timetable for this development in light of current and project economic conditions.

L-093.14

### Construction Impacts to Commuter Rail and Freight Service

Every attempt should be made to ensure that existing commuter rail and freight service is not disrupted while construction is underway. MAPC's comment letter for the South Coast Rail's ENF asked for a "comprehensive explanation of impacts on current commuter rail service during construction." While the DEIS/DEIR addressed construction impacts related to household income and land acquisition requirements, an explanation of impacts on current commuter rail and freight service during construction was not included. The FEIS/FEIR needs to address this issue with particular focus on traffic impacts related to at-grade crossings and bridge reconstruction sites. This request is also mentioned on page 23 of the Secretary's Certificate, "The DEIR should include a detailed analysis of...impacts associated with roadway intersection and bridge reconstruction associated with the rail alternatives."

L-093.15

### Freight

Allowing freight by rail to expand in Massachusetts is critical to keeping trucks off the road and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The following questions pertaining to freight need to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR:

- Acknowledgement that the policies and programs in MassDOT's Massachusetts State Rail and Freight Plans (September 2010) are consistent with the South Coast Rail program. L-093.16
- What is the existing number of freight trips in the South Coast region and when do they occur? L-093.17
- Is freight service in the South Coast region forecast to increase, decline or remain the same? L-093.18
- How exactly would freight service benefit from the implementing the Stoughton Alternative? L-093.19
- Page 4.1-75 of the DEIS/DEIR states:  
Under the Stoughton Alternative the current and future proposed freight operation splits the proposed main line. As a result, this sets up conflicts between operating passenger trains and freight trains during the same period of time. L-093.20

What are potential solutions to resolve these conflicts?



## South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346 MAPC's Comments

- Page 4.1-77 of the DEIS/DIER states:

Presently, the only access to the remaining active freight rail customers on the existing Stoughton Branch is via the Northeast Corridor through Canton Junction. This need to access the high-speed corridor will definitely be impacted by the coming of the high-speed train service. The MBTA may or may not grant a freight carrier access to the Canton area through the proposed reconstructed line between Winter Street, Taunton, and the present location of end-of-track in Stoughton.

L-093.21

How will this impact freight and commuter train service for the Stoughton Alternative?

- Are there additional issues regarding freight service once a Stoughton Alternative is implemented? If so, how should they be addressed?

L-093.22

### Amtrak

Provide an overall explanation of the impacts on Amtrak service along the corridor. How would the preferred Alternative benefit or impair Amtrak service?

L-093.23

### Parking Plan

The FEIS/FEIR needs to contain a detailed parking plan for the Stoughton Alternatives. The plan needs to consider not only legitimate parking needs, but also other Commonwealth goals, such as reducing impermeable surfaces and allowing adequate space for transit-oriented development (TOD). At a minimum, the parking plan needs to include:

- Conversion of excess parking at stations to more useful economic development or TOD uses.
- Consideration for structured parking at stations to allow more space for TOD development.
- Programs for off-hours/weekend use of the commuter rail lots to serve as parking to bolster economic development activities in the communities.
- Description of any additional private land acquisitions that would be necessary to accommodate parking, along with the commensurate impacts of those land purchases.

L-093.24

**South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346  
MAPC's Comments**

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Smart Growth

MAPC is pleased to see the findings and recommendations of the Smart Growth Corridor Plan integrated into the DEIS/DEIR and expects that these will be maintained in the FEIS/FEIR. Achieving the benefits of the smart growth scenario described in the DEIS/DEIR will depend on the implementation of the actions outlined on page 5-27, which were drawn from Chapter 7, Implementation of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan. One of the most important of these actions is the funding of technical assistance to municipalities to support the development and adoption of plans, zoning, development review procedures, and other programs and policies necessary to support smart growth and transit-oriented development. Many of these communities lack the resources they need to implement these kinds of activities, but achieving the benefits of the smart growth scenario depends on their ability to do so. The Commonwealth has committed \$300,000 each year for the past three years in technical assistance and MassDOT's Preface to the DEIS/DEIR states that annual technical assistance is expected to continue during the project development phase. The FEIS/FEIR should clarify the specific timeframes and amount of funding commitments for this continued technical assistance.

L-093.25

Another critical element of smart growth is the identification and mitigation of regional impacts when building major new infrastructure. This should certainly be the case in regard to South Coast Rail. We ask the Secretary to ensure that the FEIS/FEIR specifically call out impacts that are likely to affect more than one municipality, and to require that the proponent determine mechanisms to mitigate those impacts, just as surely as the proponent would respond to impacts that might be brought to its attention by a single city or town.

L-093.26

Finally, we note that the Commonwealth's infrastructure investment in the South Coast Rail region is now governed by Executive Order 525, which directs state agencies to invest state funds in a manner consistent with the Corridor Plan. We urge the Secretary to require that the FEIS/FEIR explain how all investments related to the development of South Coast Rail – as well as investments to mitigate adverse impacts – are consistent with the Corridor Plan and the Corridor Map accompanying that Plan. This requirement would be entirely consistent with the requirement in EO 525 that “a web-based tracking system will be developed to track investment decisions and ensure that policy decisions are transparent.” Furthermore, in order to ensure such transparency, it is essential that each state agency engaged in land use and infrastructure investment in the South Coast Region release to the public its implementation strategies to comply with the Executive Order. Both MassDOT and EOEEA should release these strategies as addenda to the FEIS/FEIR.

L-093.27



**South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346  
MAPC's Comments**

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Environmental Justice

In the discussion of indirect impacts associated with the South Coast Rail project, the DEIS/DEIR correctly notes that a smart growth scenario significantly reduces the project's indirect environmental impacts. By concentrating new development in identified areas, particularly those around existing and proposed commuter rail stations, the amount of land impacted by induced development, and the related environmental impacts of that development, are reduced. In the discussion of these indirect impacts though, the DEIS/DEIR does not discuss the potential of displacement of Environmental Justice populations in the vicinity of these stations. The FEIS/FEIR should explain how displacement will be avoided. This may include anti-displacement studies, which are among the potential uses of technical assistance funds under the South Coast Rail Plan, as well as specific state or local actions that might reduce displacement or mitigate its impacts, including but not limited to the development or preservation of affordable housing in the vicinity of the stations.

L-093.28

Historic Resources

In places where an existing historic train station will no longer be used for that function, the FEIS/FEIR must recognize that abandonment and neglect of historic structures could result in negative impacts to the community. Particularly in places like downtown Stoughton, where the train station represents an important element contributing to the historic character of the area, mitigation of this impact must include a variety of support actions, including both below market rate transfer of ownership and funding to support repairs and rehabilitation, in order to allow for viable reuse of the structure. The Secretary should require such actions to be specified in the FEIS/FEIR.

L-093.29

Visual Resources

In Stoughton, the tracks cross through the downtown near its center and are strongly part of the visual landscape. Fencing and overhead catenaries (for the Stoughton Electric Alternative) should be designed to be visually appealing so as to enhance downtown Stoughton. Current plans for the downtown area directly adjacent to the tracks include a public park and pedestrian-oriented retail and residential areas. The Secretary should require such actions to be specified in the FEIS/FEIR.

L-093.30

Monitoring and Evaluation

MAPC looks forward to reviewing a draft monitoring and evaluation plan for the long-term assessment of project impacts and mitigation in the FEIS/FEIR. The monitoring and evaluation plan will assess the accuracy of projected impacts and the effectiveness of mitigation measures, allowing for mid-course corrections if necessary.

L-093.31

## South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346 MAPC's Comments

### Stoughton Alternatives

The Stoughton Alternatives include the construction of a new station, the North Easton Train Station, which would be located on the border of Easton and Stoughton. A new parking lot with 509 spaces is proposed. The proposed parking lot is sited in Stoughton, a community in the MAPC region, while Easton is within the Old Colony Planning Council region.

According to the DEIS/DEIR, there are 239 park-and-ride trips and 27 drop off trips forecast during the morning peak hour. Does this necessitate a parking lot with 509 proposed spaces? Has the potential opportunity for using existing parking spaces at Roche Brothers and adjacent office building to the west of Roche Brothers been explored<sup>4</sup>? Has structured parking been considered at this site? A feeder bus connection should also be considered for this station in order to reduce auto trips and parking requirements.

L-093.32

The Stoughton Alternatives propose modifying the existing Stoughton Train Station to accommodate a second track. Modifications to the tracks and platforms would require changes to the parking layout in the existing lots near the station. Approximately 185 existing parking spaces would be relocated and 350 parking spaces would remain undisturbed.

L-093.33

According to the DEIS/DEIR, there are zero park-and-ride trips and 44 drop off trips forecast during the morning peak hour. Does this necessitate retaining 350 parking spaces and relocating 185 parking spaces? The FEIS/FEIR should also consider establishing a feeder bus connection for this station.

It should be noted that MAPC's comment letter for the ENF stated "although reasonable amounts of parking are essential, is it important that not all of the prime land near stations be lost to parking." Priority should be given to accommodating Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in prime sites near the stations to the maximum extent feasible.

L-093.34

### Midday Storage of Consists (Train Sets)

The DEIS/DEIR states that the rail alternatives will require midday storage of consists (train sets) in the Boston area to ensure that enough trains would be available for South Coast Rail trains to depart from South Station for the evening peak commute. The Stoughton Alternatives would require layover capacity for four additional consists.

L-093.35

- Where are the proposed locations of the storage?
- Does the storage require construction of additional facilities?
- How does this affect other train routes?

<sup>4</sup> DEIS/DEIR, Figure 3.2-36, North Easton Conceptual Station Design.



## South Coast Rail, DEIS/DEIR# 14346 MAPC's Comments

### Mid-Day Layover Storage Facilities

As part of the track expansion project, mid-day layover storage facilities would be constructed to ensure that an adequate supply of trains is available to support evening peak hour commuter transit needs.

L-093.36

- Where will the layover storage facilities be located?
- Explain how passenger and freight operations will be separated.
- What will the impact be on both freight and passengers during construction?

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

MAPC is pleased that the DEIS/DEIR mentions the need for bicycle and pedestrian access. However, the conceptual station designs need to graphically depict bicycle and pedestrian connections and their access to surrounding retail, commercial and residential uses. As previously requested in MAPC's comment letter on the ENF, incorporating bicycle and pedestrian paths along rail rights of way for the Stoughton Alternatives should be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.

L-093.37

### At Grade Crossings

Information about the Stoughton Alternatives' grade crossings is provided in the DEIS/DEIR. However, information about whether they are safe for pedestrians is not clearly conveyed. MAPC would like to see this information depicted on the Grade Crossing Figures 4.1-54 – 4.1-58 for the Stoughton Alternatives. In addition, to what extent were the grade crossings developed with the input of the communities?

L-093.38

### Bus and Shuttle Connections

The project should include a proposal to expand bus and shuttle connections between the stations and nearby retail, office, and residential uses for the proposed Stoughton Alternatives. Expanded transit service supporting the operation of the new commuter rail line should be a key element of the mitigation plan. To be successful, bus and shuttle connections need to avoid duplications of service, minimize transfer points, and minimize total travel times. The proponent should also ensure that Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that provide service in the area are incorporated into these plans.

L-093.39

### Joint Ticketing

MAPC applauds the proponent's proposed use of joint ticketing for commuter bus and rail access. SRPEDD and the commuter bus operators have advocated for transportation policymakers to address the transit fare inequity between modes with a joint ticketing system that allows bus operators to offer the same pass as commuter rail with free access to MBTA bus and rapid transit. A joint ticket for commuter bus would enhance bus service within the region and encourage the use of public transportation.

L-093.40



SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
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Raynham  
Rehoboth  
Rochester  
Seekonk  
Somerset  
Swansea  
Taunton  
Wareham  
Westport

May 4, 2011

Mr. Alan Anachecka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)

RE: Comments by SRPEDD on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on South  
Coast Rail Released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dear Mr. Anachecka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) voted unanimously on April 27, 2011 to commend the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a thorough and objective analysis of the South Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report dated February, 2011.

SRPEDD supports the analysis in the report of both the transportation and environmental factors associated with the alternatives that were evaluated.

We agree that the Stoughton Route provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford as measured by travel time and ridership. We support the Corps' findings that the operational obstacles associated with both the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternative will make these alternatives infeasible. The fact that the Stoughton route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective.

L-015.01

SRPEDD is also in agreement that the Whittenton Alternative through the City of Taunton poses additional operational problems and should not be considered further. Specifically, the large number of grade crossings in Taunton will be unnecessarily disruptive and will add to the travel time, and thus lowering the ridership numbers.

L-015.02

SRPEDD further agrees with the analysis of environmental factors including wetlands, air quality, water resources, etc. and supports the conclusion that the Stoughton route

L-015.03



performed best on the measure of environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route follows rail beds that were in use a little over fifty years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact. | L-015.03

We are very familiar with the corridor as it passes through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC and agree with the conclusion that the wetlands impact will be limited, especially if the trestle is constructed. We would further request significant mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC. | L-015.04

It should be pointed out that there are many factors beyond the project purpose that argue in favor of this project and in favor of the Stoughton Alternative. These factors include the smart growth benefits of this investment and the significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled and subsequent greenhouse gas reductions. The region also anxiously anticipates the projected economic benefits that will be associated with the restoration of commuter rail service to Southeastern Massachusetts. | L-015.05

We believe that based upon the information presented in the DEIS that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) should be determined to be the Stoughton Alternative. SRPEDD further supports the electric alternative with its lower carbon footprint and faster travel time between South Coast and Boston. | L-015.06

SRPEDD urges the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the LEDPA as expeditiously as possible. The region has been working on the restoration of commuter rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for the Corps to complete its review so that MassDOT can proceed with a financial plan and other aspects of this project. | L-015.07

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important regional project.

Sincerely,

Randall H. Kunz, Chair  
Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

Cc: Kristina Egan, MassDOT

# Municipal Government Organizations and Elected Officials

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June 2, 2011

Richard K. Sullivan Jr., Secretary  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02114  
Attention: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Office

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Project Manager  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Re: South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

The City of Boston Environment Department has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) and offers the following comments. This department comment on an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) in January 2009.

The purpose and need for the project is “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning [economic development and environmental preservation] and development strategies in the affected communities.” It is proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). This department supports the concept of rail service meeting these ends. L-087.01

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is to determine if the project is water-dependent and “to evaluate if there are less environmentally damaging practicable alternatives available, taking into consideration cost, existing technology and logistics in light of the *overall* project purpose.” The USACE has determined that the project is not water-dependent and that there are practicable alternatives.

The 2009 Environmental Notification Form (ENF) described some alternatives that would use portions of existing commuter rail lines. We noted that the Attleboro/Stoughton commuter rail line Boston stops are Hyde Park, Ruggles and Back Bay on the Orange Line (passing Forest Hills station) and South Station on the Red Line. The Middleborough line stops at JFK and South Station on the Red Line, passing Andrew and Broadway stations. The Northeast Corridor Acela and Regional trains pass Green Street, Stony Brook, Jackson Square, Roxbury Crossing, Ruggles and Massachusetts Avenue stops on the Orange Line in Boston; they stop at Back Bay on the Orange Line and terminate at South Station.

The ENF indicated that the Old Colony Main Line (Middleborough) could not accommodate additional trains without significant infrastructure improvements and that the Northeast Corridor also had insufficient capacity for new service.

Alternatives 1 through 4 would require construction of a new mid-day layover facility in downtown Boston with infrastructure such as fueling stations, inspection tracks and crew quarters. Rolling stock would be maintained at the MBTA's Southampton Street facility in Boston or at the Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility in Somerville. Alternative 5 would require layover and maintenance facilities at terminal bus stations and a mid-day layover facility near South Station. There is currently no reserve capacity at South Station to meet the bus layover and maintenance need; plans for a horizontal air rights expansion of the bus terminal will result in 16 new berths. The DEIR will analyze locations for a mid-day bus layover facility and the potential use of the expanded bus terminal for layover and maintenance.

Additional information on infrastructure needs and impacts will be presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

Alternatives included in the DEIS/DEIR are:

- No-Build (Enhanced Bus)
- Commuter Rail
  - Attleboro Electric
  - Attleboro Diesel
  - Stoughton Electric
  - Stoughton Diesel
  - Whittendon Electric
  - Whittendon Diesel

The Whittendon alternatives are a variant of the Stoughton alternatives. Attleboro alternatives would require construction of a third track along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) between the Attleboro Bypass and the Readville interlocking Station. Rail alternatives would operate seven five- to eight-coach consists daily.

The Enhanced Bus alternative would operate at 15-minute headways during morning peak hours with express service from each station to Boston. It would utilize the proposed expansion of the existing South Station bus terminal from 35 to 50 bays. It also assumes the construction of seven new terminal tracks at South Station. MassDOT has filed a recent application for the tracks to accommodate existing and projected demand for commuter rail service. The expansion proposal will proceed regardless of the outcome of the South Coast Rail project.

New mid-day layover facilities for 35 to 40 train sets would be required in the Boston area. The park-and-ride Logan Express site on I-93 in Braintree has been identified as for this use. Overnight layover facilities for the rail alternatives would be located at the New Fall River/New Bedford end of the lines.

The ENF had indicated that alternatives including a Stoughton option would require construction of a new mid-day layover facility in downtown Boston with infrastructure such as fueling stations, inspection tracks and crew quarters and that rolling stock would be maintained at the MBTA's Southampton Street facility in Boston or at the Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility in Somerville. The DEIS/DEIR does not include new/additional information about maintenance and fueling and how those needs may affect Boston.

L-087.02

Commuter rail trains would be powered by electric or diesel locomotives; the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) presently operates diesel locomotives and two diesel-electric



locomotives. Electric locomotives have higher performance characteristics than diesel including acceleration and top travel speeds. A catenary is necessary to power electric locomotives.

The Stoughton Electric Alternative meets all project purpose measures to the greatest extent followed closely by the Stoughton Diesel Alternative and the Whittendon Electric Alternative. The Bus Rapid Transit would perform most poorly. The Attleboro alternatives are the least practicable. Elements affecting Boston would include:

L-087.03

- construction of a fourth track along the NEC between Forest Hills Station and Back Bay Station;
- construction of a fourth track within existing real estate on the north side of the NEC between Readville Station and Forest Hills;
- construction of a fourth track on the south side between Forest Hills and Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue that would require demolition of the existing southern retaining wall and expansion of the cut section;
- reconstruction of several orange line stations;
- unspecified impacts to residents and business under the Southwest Corridor toward the Back Bay and abutting structures in the South End for utility relocation;
- removal and planned replacement of parks and other open/recreational spaces along the corridor including the Southwest Corridor Park which would lose 8.54 acres for tree to six years for construction and lose 2.85 acres permanently; and
- a cascading negative impact on the on-time performance of the entire southerly Commuter Rail system.

Construction of the fourth track would take 10 to 12 years.

Due to speed, noise impacts would be more severe with electric locomotives than with diesel. Preliminary mitigation measures would not be recommended until the final design process.

We appreciate that construction specifications will stipulate that all diesel construction equipment used on-site will be fitted with after-engine emission controls such as diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) or diesel particulate filters (DPFs) and that construction contractors will be required to utilize ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel for all off-road construction vehicles. We request that the same mitigation measures also be required for on-road vehicles on which catalysts or filters can be accommodated and that the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel be required. It is essential that any plan for the prohibition of excessive idling of construction equipment engines be enforceable and that the same requirements be put into place for on-road vehicles as well. Idling restriction signage may not be sufficient for this task.

L-087.04

The ENF described vibration analyses for areas in Attleboro, Norton, Lakeview, Freetown, Canton, Stoughton, Bridgewater and Middleborough. We note again that vibration is an existing issue for some Orange Line stations and their immediate environs. They are most prominent around Roxbury Crossing, Ruggles and Massachusetts Avenue; an area of the South End has also been affected by increased sound and vibration over the past two years. No vibration measurements have been taken along Boston alignments to establish existing conditions. We believe that a baseline is necessary.

L-087.05

We had asked that the DEIR identify the number of net new trips that will be added under each rail alternative and match them to the times of existing services. The DEIS/DEIR indicates that, for purposes of comparing alternatives, headways for commuter rail alternatives were set at 40 minutes on the branches and 20 minutes on the trunk, during the peak period in the peak direction. Scheduled travel times on existing services were not altered in the comparison. The rail alternatives were assumed to provide one train every 40 minutes or three trains per peak period with a fourth train operating on the shoulder near the peak rush hour periods. During the off-peak periods six additional

L-087.06

trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from the terminal stations and ninety minutes on the trunk portion. This translates to nine round trip trains per weekday operations from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day. There is no information regarding the schedules of existing service in/through Boston. This is important information for assessing impacts, including vibration. It would also help to determine, in rights-of-way used by multiple rail entities that do not work cooperatively to minimize impacts, how each contributes to conditions that affect the comfort of residents.

L-087.06

The DEIS/DEIR indicates that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for vibration will be identified during preliminary and final design. We request that more detail about existing service and conditions and planning begin while environmental review continues.

L-087.07

We again ask for a description of the work, associated timelines and potential impacts at and around Readville station when catenary is being installed.

L-087.08

On Earth Day, 2011, Mayor Thomas M. Menino released *A Climate of Progress*, his updated Climate Action Plan. The Plan encompasses the 2010 consensus report, *Sparking the Climate Revolution*, and the recommendations of Boston's Climate Action Leadership Committee and Community Advisory Committee. The Plan includes a set of wide-ranging recommendations aimed at significantly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and preparing for the risks of climate change in Boston and is the guiding document for climate change adaptation. It calls for reducing Boston's GHG emissions by 25% by 2020 and incorporating the potential effects of climate change in all planning and review of public and private projects. Both *Sparking the Climate Revolution* and *A Climate of Progress* can be accessed at [cityofboston.gov](http://cityofboston.gov) by opening the Environmental & Energy Services site and clicking on "Climate Action."

The five overarching recommendations of the Leadership Committee are:

- reduce Boston's GHG emissions 25% by 2020;
- immediately start incorporating projected effects of climate change — particularly sea-level rise, heat waves, and more intense storms — in all planning and review for municipal and private projects;
- develop a comprehensive public engagement effort, including a public commission and strong partnerships with community organizations;
- use climate action opportunities to advance Boston's green economy and jobs goals; and
- ensure that climate action has clear public and private leadership and sufficient public and private resources.

This department appreciates the inclusion of GHG information in the DEIS/DEIR and would favor electric, rather than diesel, service. We believe that the potential for renewable energy generation and energy conservation be explored along the chosen alignment. An anticipated increase in the number of days over 90 or 100 degrees and the number of consecutive high-heat days will lead to increased stress on the electrical grid. The use of diesel-powered life-safety/emergency systems that may add to ozone pollution levels and increase the heat island effect should be minimized as feasible. Generating facilities that are capable of providing power off of the grid can help to eliminate some more polluting systems. LED lighting and other sustainable technologies and practices should be included in a plan of construction and operating standards for new service.

L-087.09

We also recommend that the multiple issues associated with climate change be considered in additional project planning. Sea level rise and an increase in the number and intensity of storms

L-087.10



resulting in the need for intensified stormwater management are only two of the challenges over the life of a transportation system.

L-087.10

Base upon the information in the DEIS/DEIR, it appears that the Stoughton Electric alternative would provide the greatest overall benefit. We hope to receive more information that would add to our understanding of the complex issues undertaken in this analysis. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment.

L-087.11

Sincerely,

Bryan Glascock  
Commissioner

South Coast Rail DEIS.DEIR, 6.11.doc.DBG:MTZ.mtz



City of Fall River  
Massachusetts  
Conservation Commission  
One Government Center • Fall River, MA 02722  
TEL (508) 324-2340 • FAX (508) 324-2531

WILLIAM A. FLANAGAN  
*Mayor*

May 23, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
Email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
Email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

The Fall River Conservation Commission is writing to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative. We would further request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office establish a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) that identifies one route – the Stoughton alternative – for further study. L-034.01

We believe that of the options under consideration, the Stoughton route offers the best balance of transportation and economic development opportunities while minimizing environmental impacts. As the document shows, L-034.02

- The Stoughton alternatives have less impact on wetlands than the Rapid Bus and Attleboro options. Of the impacts, 1.8 of the acres are in the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern and are primarily the loss of wetlands that have formed on the former rail bed. The project includes relocating a stream currently on the rail bed back to its natural channel, which will create ecological benefits. The Commonwealth has committed to constructing an elevated trestle through the swamp, which will facilitate the movement of animals across the rail alignment; L-034.03

- While there are potential impacts to threatened and endangered species, the Corps lists measures to be developed in coordination with regulatory agencies to avoid, minimize and mitigate rare species impacts within the project Study Area. Mitigation for biodiversity impacts can also be included for further development in the FEIS/FEIR; L-034.04

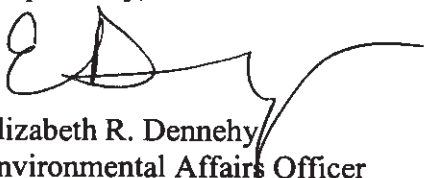


- The Stoughton route appears to meet the project purpose with the least amount of environmental damage. Trip time is a critical consideration in determining the best alternative, and rail trip time is significantly shorter than Rapid Bus, and Stoughton straight is the fastest option. The shorter travel time will attract more riders and take more vehicles off the roads, improving regional mobility and VMT reduction. Also, the Stoughton route provides greater air quality and climate-related environmental benefits; L-034.06
- The project design includes smart growth measures that would encourage the creation of compact development zones and aid in the protection of undeveloped land, which could help to preserve the character of the South Coast; and L-034.07
- Mitigation is outlined for environmental resources, visual and noise impacts and vibration in the documents. The FEIS/FEIR should present further details for the Stoughton alternative. We encourage the agencies to work together with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to develop a resource mitigation approach that addresses the Commonwealth and United States' specific needs but also takes a look at broader possibilities for the region that will serve to enhance important ecological functions. L-034.08

We would ask you to please consider that according to the criteria established by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Fall River is defined as an Environmental Justice Community. We believe that Fall River's Environmental Justice population could benefit from increased access to jobs, education and other opportunities offered by the rail project. L-034.09

In closing, we would ask you to endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.

Respectfully,



Elizabeth R. Dennehy  
Environmental Affairs Officer  
Fall River Conservation Commission

cc: Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Manager  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Ten Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

via Email (05/23/11) and regular mail



# City of Fall River, Massachusetts

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

JAMES K. HARTNETT  
PLANNING DIRECTOR

May 23, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I am writing to support MassDOT's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative of LEDPA. We are also asking that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work with the State of Massachusetts and support -- the Stoughton alternative -- for further study. L-035.01

The Stoughton route offers the best balance of transportation, economic development and environmental impact of the options under consideration. As the document shows, L-035.02


- The Stoughton route rail trip time is significantly shorter than Rapid Bus, and Stoughton straight is the fastest option. Trip time is a critical consideration for the City of Fall River in determining the best alternative. Any additional travel time will significantly affect the use of rider ship in the Fall River area.
- Overall the Stoughton route has less impact on wetlands and the environment than the other alternatives. Stoughton also provides greater air quality and climate environmental benefits.
- The Attleboro route fails operationally, and also has a high cost per rider.
- The Whittenton alternative, does not serve the people of Fall River well. These residents would experience a longer trip (by over 10 minutes each way). This longer commute time would significantly impact the rider ship numbers of city residents.

We would ask you to please consider that according to the criteria established by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Fall River has the highest unemployment rate in the state and would benefit from increased access to jobs, education and other opportunities offered by the rail project. L-035.03



In closing, we would ask you to endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative. L-035.04

Respectfully,



James K. Hartnett  
Planning Director

Cc: Kristina Egan  
Director, South Coast Rail  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Ten Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116-3973



*City of New Bedford*  
MASSACHUSETTS

RITA D. ARRUDA  
CITY CLERK

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
133 WILLIAM STREET 02740-6182  
TEL 508-979-1450 / FAX 508-991-6225

May 12, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

At a meeting of the New Bedford City Council held on April 28, 2011, the City Council voted to Adopt a Written Motion by Ward Five Councillor Jane L. Gonsalves urging that the City Council go on record in support of the South Coast Rail Project.

I am writing pursuant to that Motion to provide comments on the South Coast Rail (SCR) Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report on behalf of the City Council. The City Council strongly supports the building of the South Coast Rail Project, which is so important to the residents of the Greater New Bedford Region. The City Council also strongly supports the Stoughton alternative with a 70 minute commute. L-026.01

The SCR project is not just about access to the Boston area, although this is vitally important to the economic recovery of the City of New Bedford, it is about connectivity and opening up a Region of the Commonwealth that is/and has been under-connected, underserved, and often simply an afterthought of this Boston-centric State for far too long. L-026.02

The SCR project offers economic opportunity to Environmental Justice communities and others, including access to educational opportunities, workforce training, and service learning, which is currently prohibited by lack of public transit to the South Coast Region. L-026.03

In addition, we are urging that the Army Corps of Engineers do not extend the comment period, as the core of the information has been available online since the Fall of 2009, and further delays will preclude us from applying for Federal funding opportunities because of the need of a permitted project. L-026.04

Furthermore, the SCR project is an issue of equity. New Bedford and Fall River are the only Cities of their size and population that do not have Commuter Rail access, yet we continue to pay taxes, thus supporting public transit for all other regions of the Commonwealth. L-026.05

In closing, I would reiterate that the SCR project is an EQUITY issue, not just a transportation issue or just an economic issue. The people of New Bedford, and the South Coast Region, deserve and demand equal access that other Regions of the State, including our opponents to the north of us, have been enjoying for decades the positive impacts that Commuter Rail has brought to their Communities. We ask for nothing more or less than that which other Communities currently enjoy and benefit from. I urge that you consider this as you make your decision.

Very truly yours,

Rita D. Arruda, City Clerk/Clerk of the City Council

cc: Jane L. Gonsalves, Councillor Ward Five  
Jill MacLean, Assistant City Planner  
File

MAY16'11 REC DIV





## PLANNING BOARD

**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**

**SCOTT W. LANG, MAYOR**

May 3, 2011

Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I am writing this letter, in my capacity as Chairman of the New Bedford Planning Board, to express my strong support for the recently completed South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIR), prepared by the Corps. This report is a most thorough evaluation of a proposed transportation initiative that will benefit New Bedford and the entire south coast.

L-013.01

Fifty years ago the intent of public rail service was simply to connect New Bedford to Boston, the recent proposed transportation initiative seeks to establish new opportunities along the entire fifty mile corridor. The proposed commuter rail service is being intentionally planned to maximize economic benefit to all thirty-one communities along it's route. This initiative overcomes long-standing environmental justice issues by re-establishing transportation equity to the south coast as other gateway communities have benefitted, statewide.

L-013.02

The DEIR examines in great detail how the most practicable environmental alternative, the proposed Stoughton Alternative, is the least damaging solution in creating job access, lessening urban and suburban sprawl and anticipating the consequences of impending climate change on a regional level. With the uncontrollable rise in fuel prices, there is no better time in American history than the present to move this transportation project forward. The corridor planning study underwent a robust civic engagement process, meeting in over one-hundred different settings while examine dozens of alternative routes, economic variables and scenarios. It appears that the Stoughton alternative has risen as the preferred, most practicable alternative, affording convenient, reliable Boston access within seventy (70) minutes.

L-013.03

New Bedford has recently completed a Comprehensive Master Plan – New Bedford 2020, adopted by this Planning Board on November 22, 2010. Consistent with this Master Plan, abundant reference to the re-establishment of commuter rail is acknowledged in the transportation and economic sections. This particular rail project will complete the City's intermodal port to rail capacity. The City has also begun a long awaited re-zoning process to become consistent with this proposed rail corridor plan.

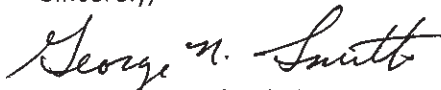
L-013.04

MAY12'11 REG DIV

On the behalf of the New Bedford Planning Board, I therefore, respectfully, urge you and the Army Corps to support this Stoughton alternative, as you continue onward towards the initiation and completion of a final EIR.

L-013.05

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George N. Smith".

George N. Smith, Chairman  
New Bedford Planning Board





## CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

### CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

SCOTT W. LANG, MAYOR

May 2, 2011

Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for the recently completed South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIR). This report is one of the most thorough evaluations of a proposed transportation initiative that I have ever reviewed in my thirty-six year career as a public service employee. L-011.01

While over fifty years ago the intent of public rail service was simply to connect New Bedford to Boston, the recent proposed transportation initiative seeks to accomplish myriad new opportunities. The proposed commuter rail service is being intentionally planned to maximize economic benefit to all thirty-one communities along this fifty mile corridor. This initiative overcomes long-standing environmental justice issues by re-establishing transportation equity between the south coast and other gateway communities, statewide. L-011.02

The DEIR examines in formidable detail how the most practicable environmental alternative, the proposed Stoughton Alternative, is the least damaging solution in creating job access, lessening urban and suburban sprawl and anticipating the consequences of impending climate change on a regional level. With the instability of oil derived transportation fuel, there is no better time in American history than the present to push ahead this transportation project. L-011.03

The corridor planning study underwent a rigorous civic engagement process, meeting in over one-hundred different settings to examine dozens of alternative routes and scenarios. It appears that consensus has it that the Stoughton alternative has risen as the preferred, most practicable alternative, affording Boston access within seventy (70) minutes. New Bedford has begun a long awaited re-zoning process to become consistent with this proposed rail corridor plan. L-011.04

I therefore, respectfully, urge you and the Army Corps to support this Stoughton alternative, as you continue onward towards the initiation and completion of a final EIR. L-011.05

Sincerely,

David A. Kennedy  
City Planner

MAY 5 '11 REG DIV

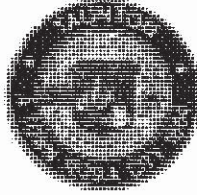
# City of Taunton

## Office of the Mayor

*Charles Crowley*  
Mayor

*Gill E. Enos*  
Budget Director

*Todd Castro*  
Assistant to the Mayor



15 Summer Street  
Taunton, MA 02780  
Tel. (508) 821-1000  
Fax (508) 821-1005

May 5, 2011

Richard K. Sullivan, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office : Aisling O'Shea  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Director,

As Mayor of the City of Taunton, I, along with the unanimous support of the several editions of the Taunton Municipal Council have enthusiastically supported the direct Stoughton Route that will provide rail service to our community and to the South Coast region in a more timely and cost effective manner. The direct Stoughton Route will travel south from Boston through the communities of Stoughton, Easton and Raynham over the same railroad bed that had been used by passenger trains over 150 years ago. Once entering Taunton, the trains will stop at a station planned along Dean Street (Route 44) where my administration has designated and endorsed a Transit Oriented District (T.O.D.) The trains would continue southward through Taunton to another station planned behind Depot Drive near the intersection of Route 140 and Route 24. The route would have only five (5) at-grade crossings through its entire length through Taunton. The direct Stoughton Route provides for the quickest route between the South Coast communities and Boston and it would provide, according to the studies, the highest ridership.

L-016.01

The citizens of Taunton through their elected representatives have gone on record as in favor of the direct Stoughton Route, and they have also gone on record as emphatically opposed to the Attleboro Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route, as those options would provide from fourteen to fifteen (15) at-grade crossings within our community, and effectively cut off public safety operations within our community. The Attleboro Route and the Whittenton Alternative Route would also cause the trips between Boston and the South Coast communities to be longer and less cost effective. The Attleboro Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route would cause the trains to run through our heavily congested residential area where the houses are right up against the tracks. The noise mitigation measures that would be necessary would also add to the costs of this route.

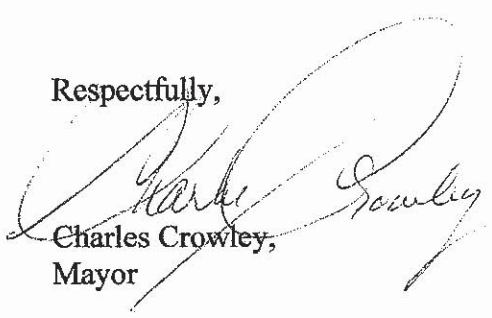
L-016.02



Attleboro officials have long contested that route for environmental reason. My administration with the unanimous support of the Taunton Municipal Council in Taunton has worked closely with the Selectman of Dighton and Norton to endorse the application Three Mile River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (A.C.E.C.), which was recently adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Attleboro Route runs directly through this A.C.E.C. L-016.03

On behalf of the citizens of Taunton, I want to express our sincere and emphatic support for the direct Stoughton Route that will provide the highest ridership, the quickest trip from the South Coast to Boston, and provides the least impact to our citizens. I believe the only intelligent choice is the direct Stoughton Route. I look forward to see that route adopted and for our community to become the gateway to the South Coast.

Respectfully,



Charles Crowley,  
Mayor

---

**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:06 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: SouthCoast Rail DEIS (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

---

**From:** Danielson, Stephanie [mailto:SDanielson@easton.ma.us]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 01, 2011 1:51 PM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Subject:** SouthCoast Rail DEIS

Dear Alan,

On behalf of the Easton Conservation Commission, we respectfully request more time to review the SouthCoast Rail DEIS and submit comments. As you know the DEIS is over 2,500 pages with a great deal of technical information to review and analyze. It is not possible to complete a thorough review in only 60 days. Therefore, we ask that you grant an additional 60 days for the comment period.

E-006.01

Sincerely,

Stephanie Danielson  
Land Use Planner

Department of Planning & Community Development  
Town of Easton  
136 Elm Street  
Easton, MA 02356  
508.230.0641

Help make the earth a greener place. If at all possible resist printing this e-mail and join us in saving paper.

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



**TOWN OF EASTON**  
**HISTORICAL COMMISSION**



May 4, 2011

The Easton Historical Commission vehemently opposes the proposed commuter rail service through our town for many reasons, including its negative impact on numerous historic districts and sites. L-014.01

The proposed route will bisect the North Easton Village National Register District, the Richardson National Landmark District, and the Ames Local Historic District. Its proximity to these districts, as well as their associated buildings, will cause irreparable harm to them. The project is ill-conceived on many levels. History cannot be mitigated. L-014.02

The promised increase in revenue to local towns will not happen. How many people south of Raynham commute to Boston daily? The Taunton bus that transported folks from Fall River to Boston was cancelled due to lack of ridership. Do people from Fall River or New Bedford want to commute 1 ½ hours each way, every day, to go to work? A 2009 report based on federal census data showed that only 1.4% of the Fall River workforce took public transportation to work. Are the people who make up their above-average unemployment rate qualified for and able to afford the trip into Boston for jobs which don't even exist? L-014.03

Using Brockton as an example: With three commuter stations, where are the promised mixed-use developments that the state predicted would magically appear around them? Associated data there shows that their residents' use of public transportation has not increased since the stations were built in 1997. The city's crime rate has increased. Could there be a connection? L-014.04

There are also a myriad of safety issues regarding grade crossings, a severe lack of safe and adequate parking, and permanent damage to the Hockomock Swamp to consider as well. L-014.05

The whole idea is a bad one. Not enough people will use this rail line, it will cost billions that we don't have (funneling money from other pressing needs for repairs to roads and bridges and funding our schools), and it will create more unfunded maintenance costs. Additionally, the damage to local, state, and national historic sites will be devastating. Once our history is gone, it's gone. L-014.06

We urge you to reconsider this proposal and spare Easton and our neighbors from the costs and devastation to our history, environment, and communities. L-014.07

Melanie-Jane Deware  
Chairman

*Melanie Deware, Steve Donahue, Paul Fitzpatrick, Edmund Hands, Tim Hurley, Greg Strange, John Ventresco*



*Raymond A. Mitchell*  
City Councilor

## City of Fall River Massachusetts

May 26, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the proposed South Coast Rail Project. This project will bring many opportunities to the residents of Fall River. Not only by allowing convenient, low cost travel options to Boston without driving, but it will also allow more employment opportunities for our residents. L-057.01

I believe that the proposed South Coast Rail Project is greatly needed by our citizens. It will allow our community easy access to jobs and services available in the Boston area. In closing, I would just like to offer my support of this great opportunity for our City.

Very truly yours,

*Raymond A. Mitchell*  
Raymond A. Mitchell  
City Councilor

/ct





**Norton Conservation Commission**

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conservation@nortonmaus.com

May 26, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan

EOEEA

Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea), EEA no. 14346

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston MA 02114

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann, Project Manager

ACOE, NE District, Regulatory Division

RE: NAE-2007-00698

696 Virginia Rd

Concord MA 01742-2751

RE: EEA no. 14346 and NAE-2007-00698, the South Coast Rail Project

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann,

The Norton Conservation Commission has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the South Coast Rail Project, EEA no. 14346 and NAE-2007-00698. We strongly agree with the MassDOT's assessment that the Attleboro Alternative is the least practicable of the Alternatives and should be eliminated from further consideration. We offer the following comments:

L-049.01

1. In the Mitigation Section, under Vibration Dampening, existing rail bed materials replaced for vibration transmission should be properly and completely removed from the sites. In the past, rail ties have been left and dumped in wetland areas adjacent to the rail line. The project must ensure that rail ties will not be dumped into Wetland Resource Areas. Section 4.12.4.3 should be expanded to clearly state the method of removal rather than stating the generic "disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations" phrase. Under Visual Screening, internal landscaped areas should include native vegetation where feasible and not include any species listed by the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE).

L-049.02

L-049.03

2. Additional potential vernal pools identified by NHESP and SCR proponents should be completed as described on page 4.14-28 in the Attleboro Secondary. Two field-verified vernal pools are mentioned in the text but not illustrated as vernal pools in the Figures. Vernal pools ATA-03 and ATA-13 should be illustrated as vernal pools in all Figures. SCR should confirm that impacts to the buffer to these two vernal pools have been evaluated.

L-049.04



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3. On page 4.14-57, SCR acknowledges tracks and rail road ties prevent amphibian, reptile and small mammal migration, except through culverts but, some of the culverts in the Attleboro Secondary are too small to allow amphibian, reptile and small mammal crossing, and may act as a barrier, particularly along the section with Wading River on both sides of the tracks in Norton. This area should be evaluated for wildlife crossings. L-049.05
4. Wildlife crossings, under-rail troughs and underpass locations should also be reviewed with the local Conservation Commission to ensure that they are appropriately placed. SCR should utilize skilled trackers to evaluate track, scat and sign for the most biologically appropriate and cost effective location for the crossing. The drift fences to funnel animals into the tunnels would have to be regularly maintained if made out of drift fence material. SCR should consider constructing them with a more permanent material like that proposed for the wingwall guides if appropriate and approved by NHESP. The requirement for such wildlife corridor crossings should be for common wildlife as well, not just state-listed species. Spotted turtle should receive special attention in the Attleboro Alternatives so that the species doesn't become threatened due to the increase in trains. The new Attleboro Bypass is proposed through undeveloped land and should include wildlife crossing features and nesting sites. There is a gravel pit area west of Chartley Pond in Norton (in Figure 4.15-4a Title 2) that may be suitable for turtle nesting restoration sites. The DEIS/DEIR acknowledges that the Gilbert Street Rear in Mansfield (wetland MMA-22) and Medeiros land in Norton will become segmented for wildlife and must provide a wildlife crossing area to prevent species isolation. L-049.06
5. Vegetation Management Plans and Yearly Operating Plans should be updated for the powerline easement and the railroad, and submitted to the local Conservation Commission for review to ensure items such as post-construction maintenance of drainage swales is included. L-049.07
6. The third track for the Northeast Corridor would require earthwork for the expanded railbed, three-track catenary supports with wires along the length of the line, reconstructing three existing train stations and reconstructing 22 bridges, which will have direct impacts to four historic bridges and indirect noise and contemplative impacts to four historic resources. Archaeological reconnaissance surveys have not been completed in these locations despite the documented potential for unrecorded sites in sensitive areas. Please require these surveys be done. Copies of archaeological surveys should be submitted to the local conservation commissions, historic commissions and boards of selectmen or city council. L-049.08





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7. The Attleboro Secondary will pass through 4.3 miles in Norton containing five resources recommended for eligibility on the National Register listing including the Wading River area, Chartley Area, Taunton Copper Works, William M. Sturdy House No. 1 and William M. Sturdy House No. 2. The Barrowsville station is within two of these resources. The Attleboro Secondary will have direct impacts to 8 historic properties and indirect and potential adverse impacts to 70 historic properties including grade crossings at Union Rd, South Worcester St, and John Scott Blvd; the Wading River Area and the Chartley Area; and the William M. Sturdy House in Norton, that should require sound insulation and mitigation barriers utilizing methods described in the Mitigation Section (4.8.5.3). The Attleboro Bypass route is assessed for moderate to high archaeological sensitivity for pre-contact/contact Native American habitation and resource procurement/processing sites and post-contact Euro-American agrarian-related cultural deposits, including the Barrowsville station location. Severe noise impacts to historic properties are expected and should require soundproofing and noise mitigation. An intensive whole site excavation-type archaeological survey should be required for portions of this route as it passes through the Three-Mile River ACEC due to expected Native American resources. | L-049.09
8. Figures 4.15-3b through 4.15-4a appear to be incorrect with respect to the southern-most portion of the maps and contain a portion of Dedham/Westwood/Norwood section of Figure 4.15-3a. This should be corrected to view the actual maps as intended. | L-049.10
9. Please clarify whether or not the Attleboro Secondary will be reconstructed along full length of track or just in certain portions. | L-049.11
10. Mitigation for the Attleboro Alternatives is required for 20.56 acres of wetland alteration. SCR proposes a watershed approach using the Watershed Plans rather than compensate within the same general area of the waterbody or reach to be altered. This approach may be reasonable, *provided* filling of wetlands does not create a local flooding problem. Should proposed wetland alteration contribute to local impacts of flooding, please require floodplain compensation or wetland restoration in those local areas rather than through a wetland banking program. Impacts to homes and businesses should be reduced as much as possible. Local officials should provide input regarding which locations may result in flooding impacts on surrounding homes and businesses. SCR should work closely with local Conservation Commissions to ensure that flooding of abutting properties does not increase as a result of this project. Similarly, vernal pool alteration is proposed and it is assumed that replication would be done on a watershed scale rather than replicated near the fill location. SCR could provide upland protection through fee simple acquisition or conservation restriction, of existing vernal pools along the route that will not be altered as part of the compensation. | L-049.12





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11. On page 4.16-119 under "Bank", SCR states that wildlife habitat evaluations will be completed to guide mitigation decisions. Please require wildlife habitat evaluations for the portions of the track that will fragment locally important wildlife habitats, such as BioMap Cores and Supporting Landscapes, areas of locally known wildlife migration routes and the entire length of the new tracks for the Attleboro Bypass. Rather than solely using Appendix B of the Massachusetts Wildlife Habitat Protection Guidance for Inland Wetlands (DEP, March 2006) in those evaluations, require the inclusion of skilled trackers (such as those with a Cybertracking Certification) to evaluate the track, scat and sign of local wildlife along the train routes. Inclusion of this important information will facilitate identifying the most appropriate locations for the placement and sizing of wildlife crossing structures. Please require that adequate funding be available for the maintenance of such structures should they require on-going maintenance and require the review of Operation and Maintenance Plans for the train route to ensure maintenance of these structures is included. L-049.13
12. Please require that any culvert repair, replacement or new construction associated with the train routes take into consideration the most accurate rainfall data for sizing purposes. Rainfall amounts should be taken from the Atlas of Precipitation Extremes for the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada<sup>1</sup> known as the "Cornell data". Use of the Cornell Data for rainfall amounts will ensure that the culverts/bridges etc. are properly sized for the rain events we currently receive and will ensure a long-term success of operation with projected climate change models for increases in rate, intensity and duration of storm events. Please also require the use of the Cornell Data in sizing storm water basins at the station locations. L-049.14
13. When each culvert is evaluated for replacement, SCR should re-evaluate the need for wildlife crossings. Page 4.16-96 says "where possible, culverts would be replaced to meet stream crossing standards". How will that be determined and by whom? It should be evaluated and coordinated with the local conservation commissions as well as the ACOE and NHESP. L-049.15
14. All storm water discharges for the Attleboro Secondary are in Norton and all receiving waters are on impaired water list. While this is already an active rail line, there currently isn't any storm water management. SCR should provide treatment to extent practicable and at a minimum improve existing conditions on all portions of the existing track where work is to be done. L-049.16

<sup>1</sup> Atlas of Precipitation Extremes for the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada. Daniel S. Wilks and Richard P. Cember. Cornell University, Publication No. RR 93-5. September 1993 and the beta website.





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15. Maintenance of tracks, country-style drainage swales, filter fabric at ballasts to capture grease-inspection must be incorporated into an Operation and Maintenance Plan that addresses the regular maintenance, repair, replacement, and disposal. | L-049.17
16. Is there an opportunity to use solar power at the traction power stations? | L-049.18
17. Norton has three ACECs; the Hockomock Swamp ACEC; the Canoe River ACEC and the Three-Mile ACEC. Storm water management projects in Norton within an ACEC have typically infiltrated as much post-development storm water as the soil can hold regardless of the minimum requirements of DEP. Project proponents have also provided a minimum of 93% TSS removal rates within their proposed storm water systems. Proposed work in Norton within an ACEC should comply with these local standards. | L-049.19
18. Public and private protected land sections of the DEIS/DEIR still do not appear to identify the lands with Conservation Restrictions that may be impacted by the rail alternatives. There are conservation restricted lands directly adjacent to the Attleboro Secondary in Norton. Protected open space layers are still inaccurate on plans (figures 4.14). Please update those Figures identifying the location of CRs and update Open Space data layers. Please include a description of any other action that needs to be taken if there is an additional conversion of protected land as a result of the map inaccuracy. | L-049.20
19. The Attleboro Alternatives would convert 8.93 acres of permanently protected land to another use with an Article 97 conversion. The DEIS/DEIR incorrectly states on page 4.10-40 that access to protected land would not be significantly impacted. The Conservation Commission and Land Preservation Society of Norton (LPS) should be allowed the opportunity to determine if the impacts to their properties will be significant. For instance, most residents access Chartley Pond at the railroad crossing on Union Ave and proposed alterations to the at-grade crossing are likely to alter that access, and is likely to be significant. Similarly, access to the LPS land is typically along the powerline on Richardson Ave. | L-049.21
20. Page 4.10-31 states that Barrowsville Pond Conservation Area and Lion's Park Ball Field would not be "substantively impacted by development of the Barrowsville Station" but does not identify the potential or the direct/indirect impacts. These must be identified. The Conservation Commission should have the opportunity decide if the proposed impacts will be "substantive" to their own property, based on local concerns at the local level. | L-049.22
21. The proposed public land alterations to 3.34 acres in Mansfield on Gilbert Street Rear would include potentially significant barriers to wildlife migration and impacts to | L-049.23



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- vernal pool species. The Article 97 conversion should include a sizeable replacement area within the same wetland/upland area. Also, the 0.65 acres of Land Preservation Society Land at the Medeiros Preserve should also be replaced in the immediate vicinity and provide a connection to other protected land as an alternate wildlife migration route to prevent fragmentation and species isolation in this northwestern portion of Norton. L-049.23
22. Mitigation measures for the Attleboro Alternatives (page 4.10-56) do not identify the 0.02 acres of public land on the Three-Mile River in Norton that will be converted as listed on page 4.10-63 or 0.65 acres of LPS land for mitigation and should be added for mitigation. These parcels should be identified and listed for mitigation. L-049.24
23. An inaccurate timeline for Shpack Superfund site clean-up is described on Page 4.12-8. The clean-up of the radiological materials is scheduled through 2011 not 2010. Also, this portion of the clean-up only encompasses the work done by the ACOE. The EPA and PRPs still need to finalize the chemical and materials clean-up. This work has not yet begun and will extend well past the 2010 clean-up date projected in the DEIS/DEIR. The conclusion of a "low potential impact" should be re-evaluated and discussed in further detail on page 4.12-43. The Shpack site fits more closely with the "high potential impact" due to the changing site use and conditions, future clean-up and wetland restoration activities, construction activities and remediation activities. The site will also have ongoing monitoring and assessment. L-049.25
24. The route taken for the materials removal from Shpack is via Union Road over the railroad tracks, at the at-grade railroad crossing. This portion of Union Road is lower than the surrounding wetlands and has been documented as a high turtle mortality area of Norton due to roadkill. Should SCR need a restoration project for the Attleboro Bypass, wildlife crossings to allow reptile and amphibian migration between the wetlands should be considered a reasonable and viable option. L-049.26
25. Screening methods of soils excavated for the Attleboro Bypass near Shpack should be more specific and include methods for radiological contamination screening (Page 4.12-55). L-049.27
26. Attleboro Alternatives include impacts to habitat for nine state-listed species. Box turtle habitat altered at the Barrowsville Station site should be replicated. The discussion of alteration of rare species habitat for the Three-Mile River should be expanded. SCR proponents must ensure that there is adequate funding for the daily monitoring proposed in section 4.15.3.4 and provide measures to ensure that the erosion and sediment controls established during construction are actually removed at the end of the project and will not create a new barrier to wildlife movement. SCR should confirm with NHESP that there are no new Priority Habitat areas along the L-049.28





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- approved route prior to construction and provide the necessary documentation and avoidance and mitigation measures; two new Wood Turtle records have been accepted by NHESP in the Three-Mile River near the bridge replacement area this year. L-049.28
27. The description of Three-Mile River on page 4.17-17 is incorrect. The Three-Mile River starts in Norton and *then* runs through Taunton. The surface water category should be updated to clarify this too. L-049.29
28. Chapter 91 absolutely takes jurisdiction over waters navigable waterway by canoe or kayak and applies to the Three-Mile River. This section near the bridge is navigable by canoe and kayak. The Open Space Committee has sponsored trips along this reach of the river in the past. L-049.30
29. The proposed construction at the Barrowsville station site would alter bordering vegetated wetland and a stream for access to the site. There is an Order of Resource Area Delineation for the wetland boundary and an Order of Conditions (OOC) for a residential development on the property. The bvww and stream have been altered and the OOC requires restoration of the altered resource areas. SCR should coordinate with the local Conservation Commission to ensure that the plans contain a restoration designs for altered wetlands and stream as part of the approval process before the Commission for the construction of the Barrowsville Station. L-049.31
30. There are two certified vernal pools on the second parcel of the permitted project at the proposed Barrowsville Station location (SCR proposes to use only one of the parcels). Impacts to the buffer zone and critical terrestrial habitat are likely to impair obligate, facultative and common vernal pool species' migration, cover, foraging, nesting and overwintering habitat. SCR may consider permanently preserving the second parcel as a local restoration project for the Attleboro Secondary. L-049.32
31. The Barrowsville Station location is assessed for moderate to high archaeological resources and should have an intensive archaeological survey conducted prior to local permitting. Copies of the survey should be submitted to the Conservation Commission and Norton Historical Society. L-049.33
32. Barrowsville station has 3.53 new acres of impervious cover and 339 parking spaces. It should be considered a LUHPPL. Please require that only non-sodium based de-icers are used at the station. L-049.34
33. Responses to the comments for the ENF are not readily found in the DEIS/DEIR as described in Volume I: DEIS/DEIR Text. Appendix 8.2-A was not included in the copy I received. L-049.35



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The Attleboro Alternative requires 18.7 new miles of track to construct a third rail to the Northeast Corridor; 2.8 miles of a two-track railroad in a new right of way for the Attleboro Bypass within the National Grid electric transmission easement, requiring new construction of catenary supports and wires along the entire length as well as a traction power facility and new two at-grade road crossings; and another 9.7 miles of track revisions to the existing track, two new stations including one in Barrowsville in Norton, new traffic lights and sidewalks, and new power stations, one at Meadowbrook Pond in Norton, for the Attleboro Secondary.

The Attleboro Alternatives do not further the stated purposes of the project due to the increase in construction costs, travel time to get into Boston and the greater amount of wetland alteration and environmental impacts than the other route options. For the following reasons, we believe that the Attleboro Alternative is not the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) and should be removed from further consideration:

L-049.36

- Construction impacts of the Attleboro Alternative include disruption of business, loss of revenue and economic opportunity, noise, dust, and disruption of traffic flows. The Attleboro Alternatives:
  - have the highest lost property tax revenue of \$81,332.57 per year in 2009 dollars; and will have a significant impact on municipalities already experiencing losses in local aid;
  - will displace six residences and six local businesses;
  - have the highest capital cost and highest cost per rider; and
  - will take the longest amount of time for construction, nearly twice as long.
- An indirect impact of the train is loss of wetland for new residential growth.
  - the Attleboro Alternative expects an additional loss of 13.41 acres of wetland for residential construction
  - the acres of decreased value show the Attleboro Alternative has a higher biodiversity impact than the other routes, in 138,496 acres of land
  - the increased water demand of 12,828,725 gallons per household is also higher than the other routes
  - there will be more greenhouse gas emissions with the Attleboro Alternative than the other alternatives. Attleboro has more vehicle miles travelled per day
- The Attleboro Alternative would operate on a poor on-time performance and negatively impact the performance of the other train lines.





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- Compared to the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives, the two Attleboro Alternatives (Electric and/or Diesel) have the: L-049.36
  - most costly construction estimates and highest cost per rider (\$2.01 billion vs. \$1.88 billion and \$1.81 billion<sup>2</sup>);
  - longest construction time (7 years vs. 4 and 3 years);
  - most residences and businesses to be displaced (6 residences vs. 4 and 3; 6 businesses vs. 4 and 4);
  - most lost property tax revenue (\$81,333.00 vs. \$71,099.00 and \$59,614.00);
  - most moderate and severe impacts from noise (1730/469 # of sensitive receptors vs. 1320/408 and 1409/417);
  - most direct and indirect (visual and noise) impacts to historic resources (8 direct/32 indirect visual/5 indirect noise vs. 6/24/0 and 7/31/2);
  - most impacts to high and moderate sensitivity archaeological areas (5/4 vs. 2/3 and 2/2);
  - most land acquisition and conversion from protected open space, by nearly four times (8.93 acres vs. 1.69 and 1.24);
    - The Attleboro Bypass requires acquisition of public and private land totaling 15.66 acres from 30 separate parcels<sup>3</sup>. Public land in Norton would need to be purchased, resulting in Article 97 conversions.
  - most upland habitat loss, primarily associated with the construction of the third track in the Northeast Corridor, (190.86 acres vs. 182.27 and 187.98);
    - An additional 20.27 acres of wildlife habitat for the rail improvements along the Attleboro Bypass and 0.42 acres of wildlife habitat would be lost for the power substations. The Bypass would create a significant barrier to amphibian movement between vernal pools and upland habitat with loss of genetic diversity from the habitat fragmentation. Edge effects and barriers to wildlife movement along the Bypass would also prevent migration along the dirt powerline corridor between privately protected open space in Norton, Mansfield and Attleboro.

<sup>2</sup> All amounts quoted in this section were taken from the Executive Summary dated February 2011, Table 1-10 Summary of Direct Impacts.

<sup>3</sup> These quantities do not match the Executive Summary Table 1-10 but were taken from Volume 1: DEIS/DEIR Text dated February 2011.



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L-049.36

- An additional 33.17 acres of wildlife habitat for the rail improvements and 0.14 acres of wildlife habitat would be lost for the power substations<sup>4</sup>.
- CAPS data show three times more direct losses in the Attleboro Alternatives than any other Alternatives (Page 4.14-99). The 31.2 miles of new track would bisect Priority Habitat and further fragment wildlife corridors created by permanently protected land pieced together by the Towns of Norton, Mansfield and Attleboro, and the Land Preservation Society of Norton, Mansfield Natural Resources Trust, and the Attleboro Land Trust. Canopy gap in new double and single track sections is anywhere between 40-80 feet for single track improvements to 80-120 feet for triple tracks construction. Norton's CAPS maps show significant loss of ecological integrity.
- most wetland habitat losses (20.56 acres vs. 11.86 and 10.34);
- most the vernal pool losses (5.36 acres vs. 1.77 and 1);
  - Attleboro Bypass would fill 2.81 acres of wetland with three vernal pools, loss of 3.37 acres of upland habitat for 7 vernal pools within 100 feet, and loss of 12.4 acres of upland habitat for 16 vernal pools within 750 feet.
  - The Attleboro Secondary would also require fill of wetlands containing vernal pools with an estimated loss of habitat of 0.73 acres, 0.90 acres of upland habitat loss of 4 vernal pools within 100 feet, and 7.14 acres of habitat of 44 vernal pools within 750 feet.
- most wetland edge impacts by nearly three times (15.85 acres vs. 5.46 and 5.45);
- most total wetland impacts in acres (20.56 acres vs. 11.94 and 10.34);
  - The Attleboro Alternative will alter 20.56 acres of federally regulated wetland, 240 linear feet of bank, 18.07 acres of BLSF and 62 locations of riverfront area. Overall wetland alteration in the Attleboro Alternatives is listed as 2.1 acres just along the Northeast Corridor and 0.42 acres within the Three-Mile River ACEC.
  - The 4.71 acres of bordering vegetated wetland (bvww) alteration for the new Attleboro Bypass will occur in undisturbed areas and will have more direct impacts as well as buffer impacts.
  - Thirty-six wetlands are found along the Attleboro Secondary route in Norton, with six stream crossings, five of which are perennial. The Attleboro Secondary would permanently alter 0.71 acres and temporarily alter 1.05 acres of bordering vegetated wetland. It will also permanently alter 3.64 acres and

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*





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temporarily alter 0.94 acres of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding; and permanently alter 0.47 acres of and temporarily alter 0.57 acres of Outstanding Resource Waters. Temporary alteration to bank is expected to be 448 linear feet. The assessment of direct wetland impacts should be evaluated with the final route selection.

L-049.36

- most total wetland impacts within ACECs in acres (2.59 acres vs. 1.72 and 1.72);
  - Vernal pool habitat within the Three-Mile ACEC (0.12 acres), 0.54 acres of buffer habitat and 3.70 acres of upland habitat would be altered.
  - A total of 0.89 acres (and 1.43 acres-temporary) of BVW, 0.42 acres (0.67 temporary) will be in the Three-Mile River ACEC for the Attleboro Secondary; 4.14 acres (1.10 temporary) of BLSF, 23 stream crossings (5 perennial), 1 CVP, 4 PVP and 3 field-verified VPs consisting of approximately 0.49 acres (0.67 temporary) of ORW alteration is proposed with this project.
  - Wetlands within three ACECs and 5.34 acres of Outstanding Resource Waters will be impacted.
- most impacts to Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) (5.34 acres vs. 1.71 and 0.95);
- greatest number of proposed storm water discharges to waterbodies both for ACECs and non-ORWS;
- most habitat fragmentation, resulting from 2.8 mile Attleboro Bypass;
  - Two BioMap Core habitat areas would be altered in Norton along the Three-Mile River and ACEC. Similarly, two locations of Living Waters in Norton would be altered with new bridges. Bridges would have to be constructed to prevent negative impacts to fisheries or flow of water. Temporary impacts to terrestrial and aquatic wildlife would be severe in the undeveloped sections. Mitigation should be required. Construction should be avoided during the breeding season (April through June) in Attleboro Bypass, as proposed, and portions of the Attleboro Secondary within the Three-Mile River ACEC. Turtle gates and wildlife underpasses should be employed along the Attleboro Bypass and portions of the Attleboro Secondary near the Wading River and the Three-Mile River BioMap core areas. Replacement habitat should be incorporated into the plans for the Attleboro Bypass and Attleboro Secondary within the Three-Mile River ACEC.
- the most construction in drinking water protection areas;
- the most discharges to a drinking water protection area; and



**Norton Conservation Commission**

70 East Main Street

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- potential to impact 22 public water supply wells, including 6 in Zone I.
- The Attleboro Alternatives will impact 17.5 acres of designated farmland, with 7.1 acres of farmland soil to be converted in the Attleboro Secondary. Farmland soils in Norton at the Barrowsville Station include unique farmland soils and farmland soils of statewide importance.

L-049.36

Greater access to and use of public transportation, such as this proposed rail project, will provide a significant benefit to Massachusetts in terms of reducing emissions from the number of single-passenger commuter cars, bringing us closer to the goals of the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2020. While some riders may not take the train the entire route into Boston, many may find job opportunities at other stops along the route and will help stimulate our local economies and reduce unemployment. We are encouraged by the inclusion of LID techniques proposed for stations, including infiltration, permeable pavement and rain gardens.

L-049.37

L-049.38

The Norton Conservation Commission reiterates its support of removing the Attleboro Alternative from further consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Henry,  
Chairman

CC: VIA EMAIL:

Kristina Egan, MassDOT

Lisa Standley, VHB

Eric Hove and Nancy Farrell, Regina Villa

Stephen Smith, SRPEDD

Michael Yunits, Town Manager

Heather Graf, CCAST

Frances Shirley, Land Preservation Society of Norton

Elizabeth Leidhold, Mansfield Conservation Agent

Ruth Goold, Norton Historical Society VIA REGULAR MAIL





## HARBOR DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

52 Fisherman's Wharf | TEL (508) 961-3000  
New Bedford, MA 02740 | FAX (508) 979-1517  
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### HDC COMMISSIONERS

Kristin Decas, Port Director  
& HDC Executive Director

Mayor Scott W. Lang, Chairman

Richard Canastra, Vice Chairman

Davis L. Sullivan, Treasurer

Edward J. Hsley, Clerk

Dr. Brian Rothschild

James Dwyer

Patricia Laroau

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

May 26, 2011

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

I am writing today in support of the South Coast Rail project and the Environmental Impact Statement that is currently being commented upon. To benefit freight and passengers, uncongested access to the Boston area is important. Therefore, the Port of New Bedford prefers the Stoughton route above the Attleboro alternative.

F-006.01

The benefits of moving freight and people by train are substantial. A train can move freight more efficiently, reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

F-006.02

The South Coast Rail project will provide and update a crucial link to the Harbor Development Commission (HDC) of New Bedford, where I serve as the Executive Director. This rail link will give the port an ability to move freight from vessels to rail, with the potential of taking thousands of trucks off of local roads. The savings in road maintenance and fuel consumption will be substantial.

The South Coast Rail project will also restore passenger rail transportation from South Station in Boston to the South Coast of Massachusetts, catalyzing nearly half a billion dollars in economic development every year. The cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford are the only cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by commuter rail.

F-006.03

In the interest of understanding the importance of rail and freight to the Port of New Bedford, the HDC commissioned a study (enclosed), which was released in April, 2011. It is important to keep freight in mind as part of the review and assessment process.

F-006.04

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call my office at 508-961-3000.

Sincerely,



Kristin Decas

Executive Director

New Bedford Harbor Development Commission

CC:

Mayor Scott W. Lang, City of New Bedford.

Ned Codd, MassDOT

Kristina Egan, MassDOT

Matt Morrissey, NBEDC

Louis Elisa, Seaport Council

Ellen Cebula, Seaport Council

Jill McLean, City of New Bedford

David Kennedy, City of New Bedford



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April 29, 2011

## PORT OF NEW BEDFORD MASSACHUSETTS



### FREIGHT RAIL CONNECTIONS

Excerpts from the New Bedford Business Development  
Study

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## Freight Rail Connections

One of the most critical elements that differentiate small to medium niche ports from each other in the competitive regional market is their ability to offer a wide range of cost effective and efficient land based transportation services. This includes competitive truck and rail service providers, efficient road access and freight rail with efficient connections to the national rail system. Larger ports because of higher volume throughputs, and subsequent higher revenues, are able to maintain and improve these services because of the capability to handle large amounts of cargo cost effectively to and from waterfront facilities. Smaller ports face pressure to redevelop rail properties as communities abandon port activities in favor of less-industrial economic development. Many ports have seen the erosion of freight rail infrastructure in favor of commercial development, recreational use of right of ways for trails or the development of commuter services. This erosion of freight rail infrastructure has contributed to the loss of port activity and opened the door to increased gentrification around marine facilities. This has reduced the competitive opportunities for several commercially viable seaports.

New Bedford has freight rail access and a pending rail improvement project that should benefit the local economy. The New Bedford Freight Rail Yard and proposed Transportation Center collectively constitute the primary rail facilities in the Port district of New Bedford. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Agency (MBTA) has plans to develop the western side of the current New Bedford Rail Yard site as a passenger station and layover yard for MBTA commuter trains as part of the MBTA's South Coast Rail project, which entails the extension of commuter rail to New Bedford and Fall River. The passenger facility is sometimes referred to as the "Whales Tooth" facility. In addition to the station, the MBTA intends to create an adjacent parking lot.

The Commonwealth recently completed the "First Taking" segment of a transaction between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and freight railroad CSX. In that transaction, certain property along the eastern side of the current yard has been designated for freight purposes. The designated properties include serving yard tracks and connections to:

- The Teant Track site owned by the City of New Bedford,
- The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) dredged material handling site along Herman Melville Blvd.,
- Rail access to the former Revere Copper facility,
- Rail access to the Maritime Terminals, and
- Developable property along Herman Melville Blvd, retained by CSX.

In addition to the designated freight only facilities in New Bedford Yard, the serving freight railroad (Massachusetts Coastal Railroad, or "Mass Coastal") can access customers at and around Nash Road, and the New Bedford Industrial Park off Braley Road. While the New Bedford Yard site is key to assessing port development potential, the other sites mentioned above may provide additional opportunity for freight rail traffic. In aggregate, New Bedford has access to more rail facilities than many similar sized ports.



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Figure 1 Proposed New Bedford Freight and Commuter Rail Facility

### Role of Rail in Development of Small to Medium Size Ports

Rail is increasingly becoming a critical component of port development in small to medium sized ports throughout the United States and Canada. Ports that have allowed this infrastructure to erode have seen decreased port capacity for handling freight, shifting cargo moves to higher cost, lower volume methods, such as truck, making some ports less competitive.

Ports that retain good rail and highway connections have found success in attracting freight and cargo from larger ports that have, in many instances, become more specialized and expensive. Smaller ports often have the ability to be more aggressive in labor costs and terminal pricing but must retain the flexibility to handle a wide range of cargos and adapt to changing market conditions. Essential to this is the ability to handle cargo movements between various transportation modes (vessels, rail and trucks). Terminal and freight yards must be maintained and operated in an efficient manner. In addition, value added services such as Customs port of entry designation, free trade zones, cargo processing and warehousing all contribute to port competitiveness in regard to providing for a full range of services.

There are certain elements that are necessary for freight rail infrastructure to provide proper support to a port. These elements include a local serving yard, transloading capabilities and warehouse and/or cross-dock capabilities. While on dock rail capabilities make movement of certain materials easier, on dock rail is not an essential element. Additionally, specific operating capabilities and clearance restrictions play heavily into the mix.

Rail access allows a port to carve a niche not available to non-rail-served ports. The universe of ports on the East Coast with active rail connections is limited. The Port of New York and New Jersey, Halifax, Norfolk, Savannah, Jacksonville and Miami have developed extensive rail-port infrastructure which has allowed them to develop as significant container ports. Smaller less specialized ports with rail infrastructure have developed as neo-bulk, break bulk or bulk handling ports. The commodities moved through these ports vary. Some examples include Norfolk, which also handles large volumes of coal;

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Philadelphia, which moves significant amounts of steel and ingots; and New London, which handles large volumes of lumber. The lumber moving through the port of New London is almost exclusively brought in by rail, stored at the port for distribution and then distributed to local retailers by truck. Other ports handle and process frozen fish as well as pulp and paper which can be brought into port areas in larger shipments by rail that exceed over the road transportation limits.

### **Rail Components Required for Efficient Marine/Rail Interface**

Having a local serving rail yard of adequate size is critical to a port's freight handling capability. The serving yard needs to have sufficient tracks to switch inbound trains and build outbound trains while holding cars, both loaded and empty, for local customers. The yard tracks and switching leads should be of such length to support the longest train contemplated. The current yard at New Bedford meets this requirement. In addition to the existing infrastructure, New Bedford contains a property adjacent to the rail line (shown in red hash-marks in the figure below) that was retained by CSX and is available for development as a transload (or related) facility.

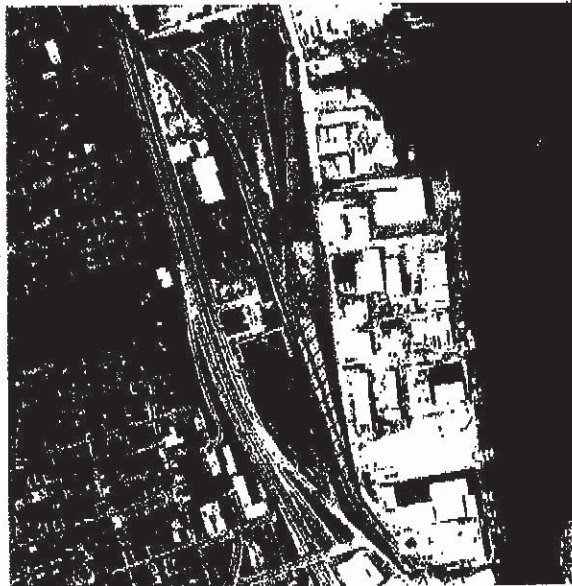


Figure 2 MBTA Safe Exclusion Sites

Rail-served ports also need to have transload capabilities which are critical to the intermodal supply chain. This provides the port with the capability to unload product from, or load product onto railcars. This includes facilities such as the team track facility which was constructed by the City near the corner of Wamsutta and Herman Melville Blvd. This facility, with the paved area between tracks allowing trucks, forklifts and cranes as needed to access rail cars in loading and unloading operations. This transload infrastructure and capability allows the New Bedford to support both the surrounding port area, and the general Southeast Massachusetts region. Additionally, the EPA funded site on Herman Melville Blvd, currently utilized in connection with the New Bedford Harbor clean-up project, provides an additional transload capability, including direct rail to barge, or barge to rail capability. As discussed below, having both near dock and on dock capabilities provide a competitive advantage to New Bedford.



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Another element to consider in assessing rail served capabilities is rail-served warehouse and transfer facilities. The EPA funded site offers a number of future capabilities once the New Bedford Harbor clean-up project is completed. The Maritime Terminals facilities also were historically rail served and served as a transfer point or in-transit facility between rail and ship. To be able to compete in certain markets such as in the handling of food and beverage products, finished goods, seafood or project cargoes, having warehouse and in-transit capacity capability is critical.

### **New Bedford Connections to the National Rail Network**

The Mass Coastal Railroad is a short-line railroad based in Hyannis, Massachusetts that serves the city of New Bedford for freight rail purposes. Mass Coastal took over the New Bedford switching operations in early 2010, replacing CSXT, which had served New Bedford since the purchase of Conrail. Mass Coastal in turn interchanges with CSXT, one of two major (Class One) railroads on the US East Coast. Interchange between Mass Coastal and CSXT occurs at Cotley Junction in East Taunton, Massachusetts near the intersection of Route 140 with Route 24. CSX has a rail network that operates from Florida to the northern border of the US, as shown in Figure 20 below. The company, which is headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, owns approximately 22,000 route miles in the United States. It is one of the three Class I railroads serving most of the U.S. East Coast, along with Norfolk Southern Railway and Canadian Pacific Railway. From Cotley junction CSXT can also access other Class One railroads (such as Norfolk Southern, Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific) across the U.S. as well as regional/short line rail operations in New England. Several short-line railroads in Massachusetts have existing bulk transload and commodity distribution facilities (or have proposed these facilities) that could potentially be linked to New Bedford for import and export of cargoes. In addition, the Free Trade Zone in New Bedford is an attractive feature for developing partnerships with inland rail and facility operators. Figure 19 below shows the freight rail network in Massachusetts and surrounding states.

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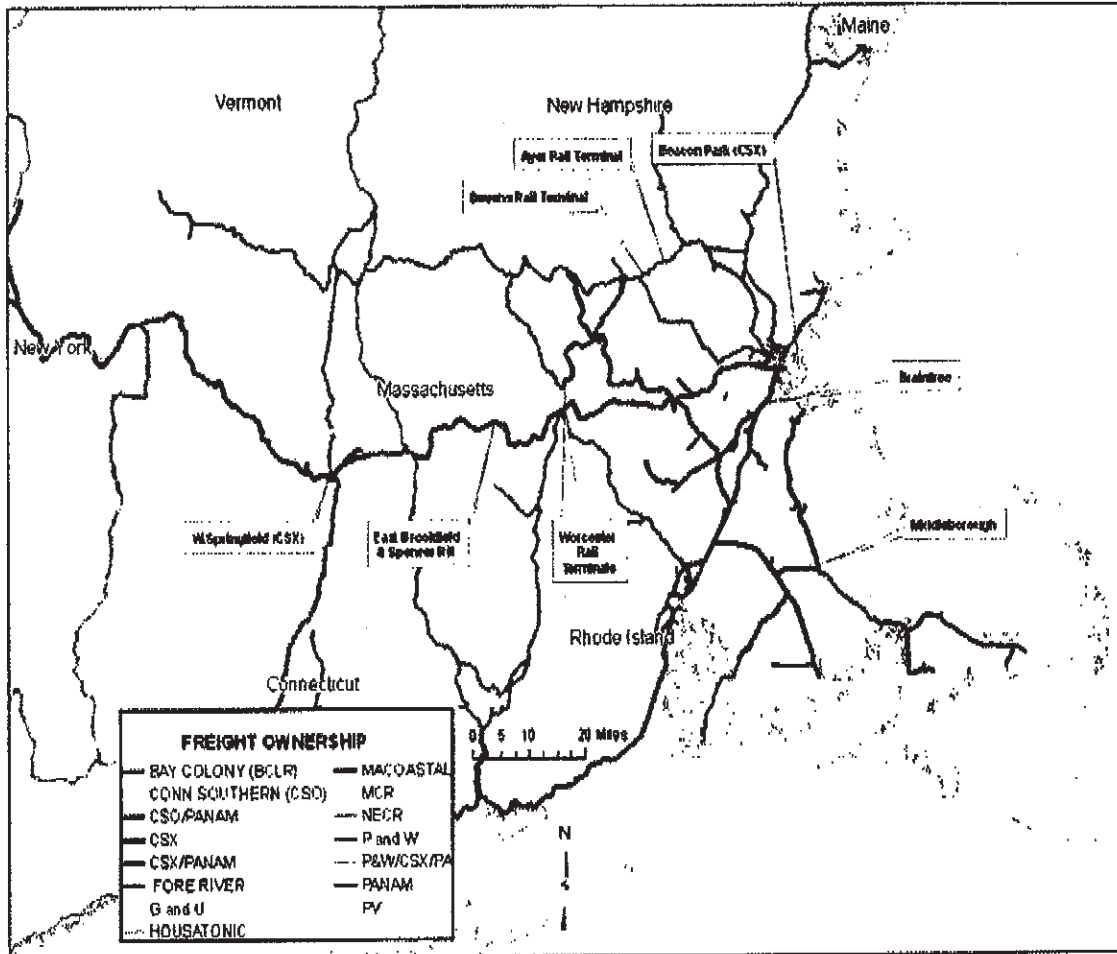


Figure 19 Freight Rail Ownership in Massachusetts



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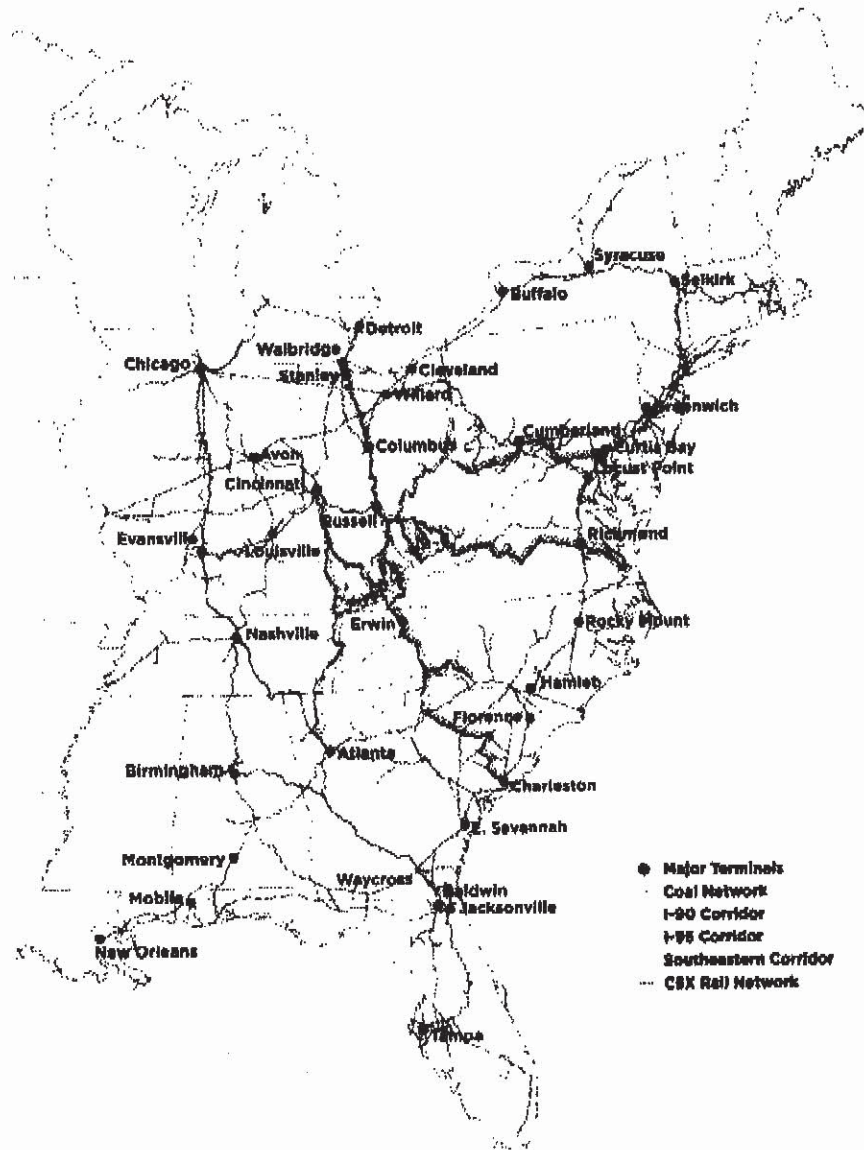


Figure 20 CSX System Map

The actual rail right of way into New Bedford is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and upon completion of the South Coast Rail passenger project, will be maintained and controlled by the MBTA. Impacts of the MBTA project on potential freight rail in the area are generally positive. While commuter trains will occupy rush hour windows, currently anticipated passenger train operations will

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still allow daylight operations and daylight switching at New Bedford. The South Coast Rail project will also result in improved track conditions allowing for the safe and efficient handling of rail cars into the port.

The Port of New Bedford has the potential to service several inland areas through rail connections that currently handle bulk, neo-bulk, and container cargo. This provides the port with the opportunity to develop an inland port connection. Inland ports are successful when they have a variety of transportation options including connections to seaports. Several smaller ports in New England have developed niche markets which have been enhanced through effective rail connections, such as Portland, ME and Quonset Point- Davisville, RI.

The study identified at least one short line railroad, the Mass Central Railroad that expressed interest in working with the port to develop marine transportation connections and take advantage of a foreign trade zone. The Mass Central Railroad (MCER) is a 26 mile railroad that connects with the CSX Railroad in Palmer and extends rail service as far as South Barre, MA. The railroad handles both domestic and international cargo, including commodities shipped to and from Canada and Mexico as well as overseas shipments originating in South America that pass through the Port of New York.

In 2009 the railroad moved 2,032 railcars handling approximately 200,000 tons, equivalent to 8,000 truck loads outbound. In 2010 as of June 30, the railroad moved 3,000 railcars handling 300,000 tons equivalent to 12,000 truck loads outbound. The railroad has a capacity to handle 10,000 railcars or 1 million tons equivalent to 40,000 truck loads outbound. There is also a large amount of available outdoor and indoor storage located in various facilities including 20 acres of outside storage with an additional 100 acres under option. The railroad has 100,000 square feet of indoor storage.

The primary commodities that are handled by Mass Central includes lumber, laminated veneer wood products, plastic, steel including large unit sizes for bridge construction, structural steel parts, rebar, pipe, paper including large rolls of news print, boxed consumer products, paper products, utility poles, electrical parts including transformers, bagged agricultural products, bagged animal feed products, large consumer products including appliances, railroad ties, fencing materials, construction materials including bagged sand, cement and cement mixes, plumbing and electrical parts, marble, granite, limestone panels, bulk aggregate stone and or sand, auto parts including engines, transaxles and auto body and trim parts, truck parts including stackable truck bodies, engines and transmissions. The railroad also handles rock salt in bulk for use on municipal roadways.

In addition to bulk products, the railroad also handles a variety of packaged food items including canned vegetables, canned specialty products such as ketchup, milk products, spices, herbs, coffee flavorings (Domestic and International), specialty pastas, canned cookies, bulk candies, bulk nuts, canned and bottled olive oil and vegetable oil, beverages including water, beer, formulated drinks, bagged flour, sugar and salt. Commercial and consumer goods include furniture, office equipment, janitorial products including 55 gallon packaged cleaning products, lawn mowers, snow blowers, lawn tractors, recreational equipment including recreational ski vehicles, water craft, consumer products including clothing, shoes, boots and kitchen wares.

Most commodities handled by the railroad move domestically with origin and destination points throughout the United States however they also handle a number of products with O/D points in Canada and Mexico. Overseas bulk, neo-bulk and containerized freight is transshipped through U.S., Canadian and Mexican ports and includes specialty wood products shipped via container and originating in South America.



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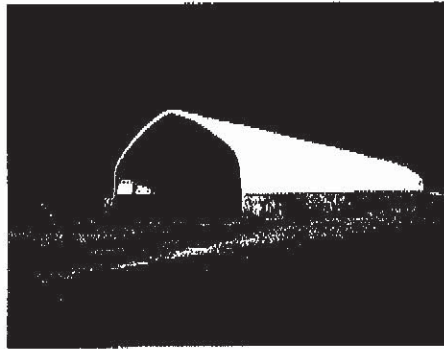


Figure 21 New Mass Central Salt Shed Near Palmer MA.

The railroad has planned a series of new infrastructure improvements over the next several years for the handling of various commodities. This includes additional inside storage which will be planned to be added in 2011 design to provide 40,000 square feet of storage capable of 3 pallet stacking under open span roof structures. Also planned for 2012, is an additional 40,000 square feet also designed for 3 pallet stacking under open span structures. The railroad is promoting the development of an intermodal container facility with the capacity to handle 9,000 inbound and outbound trucks per week planned for construction for servicing several retail firms in 2012.

In relation to the Port of New Bedford, the combined capabilities of CSX, Mass Coastal and the Mass Central, in addition to the other inland rail connections through Palmer, provide the port with a reasonable inland port capability that can provide efficient and cost effective connections for higher volume cargos. This would make the port comparable to other New England ports such as New Haven and New London, CT; Providence or Quonset Point-Davisville, RI. The ability to connect to outlying facilities provides both the railroad and the port a wide variety of price competitive services with potential Marine Highway connections to ports such as Norfolk, New York/New Jersey, and Halifax.

### **Rail Right of Way Clearances**

The route from the general US rail network to New Bedford has certain restrictions both in terms of the dimensions of a railcar that can be moved over the route and the weight of the cars and lading that can be handled. Rail clearances are primarily dictated by geometry and geography, and are further impacted by structures adjacent to or above the railroad. In that regard it should be noted that certain main line tracks will have a larger clearance envelopes than secondary lines. The lines in southeastern Massachusetts connect ultimately to the CSX main line running between Boston MA and Albany NY. Commodities traveling on this main line are varied, and the railcars carrying these commodities cannot exceed 19'6" above the rail and have a maximum weight restriction of 315,000 pounds per railcar.

The railcars that traverse the lines into and out of New Bedford cannot exceed 15'6" above the rail and are restricted to no more than 263,000 pounds per railcar. These clearance restrictions are primarily dictated by physical impediments related to Amtrak and MBTA operations. Amtrak operates over the line between New York City and Boston known as the North East Corridor. This line is electrified and the overhead wires, called catenary wires, restrict the allowed height of rail cars along this corridor. Cars moving between Mansfield, MA and Attleboro, MA are therefore restricted to a height that will fit below the catenary wires. Additionally, over dimensioned railcars cannot clear the

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various station platforms between Mansfield, MA and New Bedford which includes current platforms or proposed platforms. The clearance restrictions may impact the ability to attract extreme over-dimensioned loads to this location, however most typical "high and wide" commodities, such as power production equipment, heavy machinery and wind turbine components will be able to move through this corridor safely and efficiently.

The restriction on these lines to loads not exceeding 263,000 pounds is primarily a restriction dictated by two elements, track condition on CSX owned lines between Framingham, MA and Mansfield, MA and timetable restrictions over MBTA and Amtrak controlled properties. While the lines from Taunton, MA to New Bedford are in poor condition, it is anticipated that the MBTA South Coast Rail project will make these line on par with other MBTA owned and operated properties. When that occurs, the restrictions, other than the portion on CSX owned property between Framingham and Mansfield as noted will be restricted only "by timetable". This means that while the track structure may indeed be capable of handling heavier cars, there is an administrative restriction precluding such movement. This issue, and a path towards addressing it, is discussed in depth in the Massachusetts State Rail Plan.

Beyond capacity constraints, there are operating restrictions that impact freight movements to and from New Bedford. These are primarily related to passenger rail movements over the various lines between Framingham and New Bedford. The net result of these restrictions is that movements into and out of southeast Massachusetts occurs in the overnight timeframe, and that therefore movements into and out of New Bedford would likely occur during daylight hours, after the morning commute time and before the afternoon commuter window. While current freight service patterns result in 2 to 3 day a week service to New Bedford, there are no operating restrictions that would preclude 5 day a week service for this area (the 2-3 days per week is driven by demand) . Such service would be Monday through Friday, as the CSX trains to and from southeast Massachusetts operate on such schedule.

### **Economic Impacts of Freight Rail Yard Operations in New Bedford**

Maintaining and improving the current rail yard, between Route 18 and Herman Melville Boulevard and south of Wamsutta Street in New Bedford, will benefit the City of New Bedford and improve intermodal freight connections throughout the region. The location of the existing rail yard, adjacent to the port of New Bedford will allow for heavy bulk commodity shipments to travel to and from the port via rail, reducing the number of trucks on such arterials as I-195 and Routes 140 and 24.

Strategic investments to the freight rail system connections in New Bedford are underway, as funding has been awarded through the first round of competitive transportation stimulus funds, or Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, for the Fast Track New Bedford Project. This \$20 million transportation grant allows the Commonwealth to rehabilitate five rail bridges (along with station improvements) in New Bedford enabling rail freight flows to continue throughout the region, increasing train speeds, and reducing travel time. According to the application, these improvements will enable future freight flows of up to 1,800 carloads per year, including shipments of PCB dredge material to be moved out of the New Bedford harbor superfund site.

The existence of the rail yard is crucial as an economic driver. Access to the rail yard can leverage additional investment at the port and provide economic development opportunities resulting in additional job growth. The rail yard's close proximity to the port can enable operations at the south terminal to utilize rail, expanding operations, and create up to 51 direct new jobs, and up to 76 indirect



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and induced new jobs -- see Figure 22 below. Transload and distribution facilities will also benefit from additional rail infrastructure and freight diversion to rail. For example, a new warehousing and transload facility of 20,000 square feet could have as many as 18 to 22 new direct jobs.

Potential	Rail yard	5	11
	Transload	18	30
	Marine terminal - containers	16	20
	Marine terminal	12	15
	Total	51	76

\*Based on IMPLAN model and job multiplier analysis

Figure 22 Potential Job Creation

In addition to these economic benefits, an additional benefit is the reduction of trucks on Massachusetts highways. Fewer trucks will in turn reduce highway maintenance costs, accidents, greenhouse gas emissions, roadway congestion, and shipper costs. According to the TIGER Grant analysis for Fast Track New Bedford the rail improvements will reduce truck traffic significantly saving as much as 292,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year. This could reduce GHG emissions by an average of 110 tons per year. Therefore the benefits of preserving and maintaining freight rail connections will have significant long lasting impacts statewide by driving down costs, reducing congestion, and providing several positive social and economic impacts.

## Development Potential

Freight rail service to southeast Massachusetts will improve due to the improvements in track structure resulting from the MBTA South Coast passenger rail project, and from the introduction of a new, local, freight rail provider, Mass Coastal Railroad. Within the restrictions discussed above, there is significant opportunity to develop rail business to the port of New Bedford and to develop distribution type traffic to and from locations throughout southeastern Massachusetts, including at the New Bedford Industrial Park.

Both port rail development and distribution development will have some of the characteristics of what are sometimes referred to as "freight villages" which are areas where freight can move easily and efficiently between transportation modes and out to the end-users. A "freight village" is composed of a broadly defined intermodal facility at its core. In this context "intermodal" means any commodity that transfers from one mode of transportation to another, whether that would be rail to ship, ship (or barge) to rail, or ship to truck, rail to truck or truck to ship or rail. There is also a potential for the transfer of containerized freight if coastal feeder services as part of the Marine Highway can be developed. The intermodal facility is the catalyst for economic development by companies that store, distribute or provide services in the logistics chain moving consumer products. A typical freight village consists of freight production and distribution facilities and related infrastructure, such as manufacturing facilities, warehousing, cross-dock facilities, repair facilities and office space.

A freight village serves two primary goals:

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- It brings together the flow of freight transport managed by transportation and logistics companies to reduce costs and increase productivity; and
- It draws transportation and distribution-related activity to the area because of the consumer-related nature of intermodal freight.

The intermodal terminal within a freight village serves as a magnet, spurring economic development by companies that store, distribute or offer services in the logistics chain movement of consumer products. One such service is the, so-called "stuffing" of containers for the export market. Heavy loads, such as paper and pulp products, could be transloaded into containers in New Bedford and then put on coastal feeder services to larger ports for international export. Performing this service in a designated port area would allow the containers to be loaded to a heavier tare than containers that would have to be transported over State roads. New Bedford is in a position to handle the transload from rail cars to containers much more cost effectively than similar facilities in larger ports where labor and overhead costs are often more expensive. New Bedford is also closer to major export centers such as the Port of New York and New Jersey, Delaware River Ports and the Ports of Norfolk and Baltimore than ports further north such as Portland, Maine which until recently had a successful pulp and paper export feeder service operation. All-water services can also be less expensive to the shipper as they avoid labor assessments for over the road containers in major ports, the terms of which are included in master union labor contracts. Additionally, New Bedford is not subject to the Harbor Maintenance Tax because of its designation as an EPA cleanup site

Freight villages are often Public-Private Partnerships that, when located appropriately, provide significant benefits to the local community, regional economy, transportation providers, shippers and support service providers. New Bedford could develop this type of facility which would provide the port with a full service cargo capability. Companies involved in the transportation and distribution of goods often find many benefits in locating within a freight village, including:

- The presence of existing or shared infrastructure, which minimizes the need for an individual company to expend its capital to develop costly, capital-intensive infrastructure;
- The potential to share resources such as security, maintenance, management and other support services;
- The potential for cost-savings for shipment of goods, due to the opportunity for companies to combine shipments with others in the freight village, and therefore to ship products in highly efficient and lower-cost units;
- Synergistic business opportunities with other companies located within the freight village; and
- The existence of the latest support technologies (software, radio frequency identification systems, real time communication network) and management skills that can be shared among multiple companies.

Freight villages also benefit the public in a variety of ways, including:

- Supporting and enabling trade;
- Environmental benefits (including congestion relief, reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled, and lower energy use);
- Job creation; and
- Restoration of lands to tax roles.



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By sharing or consolidating resources and infrastructure, a freight village also minimizes the potential for redundant and or under-utilized infrastructure to be built by either the public or the private sector.

In addition to the direct benefits to the public and private companies directly involved in the supply chain, freight villages also spur long-term indirect and induced economic development in vehicle service, repair, leasing facilities, hotels, restaurants, training facilities, employment agencies, insurance companies and communications companies located throughout the local community.

### **Demand for Rail Freight Infrastructure in New Bedford**

There are several commodities that are described in this Report that are currently transported to/from the Port via truck; there may be opportunities in the future to transport these commodities via rail. One example of this is the fresh fruit that arrives from North Africa on vessels that require approximately 100 to 150 truckloads to transport the fruit from New Bedford to their final destinations in the US or Canada. There is a potential to transport fresh fruit by rail from the Port of New Bedford to inland destinations. Given that these vessels transport an average of approximately 135 truckloads, or approximately 45 railcar loads, there may be a need in the future for staging approximately 50 railcars in New Bedford in order to have the capability of transporting the fruit, or other commodities, via rail.

In addition to the existing commodities and cargo being transported through the Port, there are future potential opportunities that need to be taken into consideration when contemplating the rail freight needs of the Port. These include:

- **Wind Energy Components:** Given that the Port of New Bedford has been identified as the port that will provide infrastructure to support the construction of the Cape Wind project in Nantucket Sound, consideration must be given to the potential for some of the wind energy components to be transported to the Port via rail. If this were to occur, the Port would benefit from having the capability to receive and stage railcars as well as additional areas for transloading and storage of these wind energy components
- **Containerized Refuse and Related Materials:** There is a potential to receive containerized refuse and related materials from Martha's Vineyard. Currently, the waste generated on Martha's Vineyard is primarily transported via trucks which travel on the Steamship Authority ferries. The waste is then trucked to an Energy-from-Waste facility in Rochester, MA. There may be significant cost savings to Martha's Vineyard if this waste could be transported via container through New Bedford and on to railcars for disposal at landfills or Energy-from-Waste facilities.
- **Short Sea Shipping:** There is a potential for New Bedford to attract Short Sea Shipping opportunities. One such proposed opportunity, Jersey Harborside Railroad, would involve

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transload of containers from barges to railcars and/or trucks at the Port of New Bedford. In discussions with Jersey Harborside Railroad, there is the potential for 1,000 to 3,000 containers per week. Assuming four containers per railcar, this equates to approximately 250 to 750 railcars per week. However, assuming that this service did become operational, the rail haul would have to be competitive against a truck haul of these containers. At current transportation costs, truck transportation is typically more cost effective than rail transportation for hauls under approximately 300-400 miles.

- **Restoration of Waterfront Sidings:** There is the potential to restore the rail sidings that historically had served the waterfront facilities at the Port. There is the potential for rail freight needs from facilities such as the seafood processing facilities, sand and gravel facilities and the Maritime Terminal. If these rail sidings were to be restored, these facilities could generate several railcar loads (inbound and outbound) per week.

As mentioned previously, there is an existing rail-served facility at the Port of New Bedford which is currently dedicated to the staging of railcars for the transport of dredge materials removed from the Harbor. According to the EPA, as of November of 2010, it is expected that this dredging activity will continue for over 40 years. This is based on EPA's current operation of hydraulic dredging, de-sanding, dewatering and off-site disposal and assumes an annual funding amount of \$15 million per year. Additionally, the railroad stores empty cars awaiting dredge material at the city owned railyard on Wamsutta Street. Given that the EPA facility and a significant portion of the city owned railyard will be dedicated to the EPA dredging project for the foreseeable future, we believe that it would be beneficial to the Port to identify an additional area that would be able to accommodate additional staging capacity for to support potential growth in rail activity at the Port.

There are freight rail operations constraints inherent in the current configuration of the main line track and yard leads at New Bedford. The length of the tail track (the track south of the switch into the freight yard) is the controlling length for outbound freight trains. Additionally, the run-around track which is located on the freight lead, acts as a control or limit to train length. Both the tail-track and the run-around track are fully adequate to meet current rail demands in New Bedford, and collectively accommodate a train length of approximately 16 railcars. However, if the city wishes to position itself to encourage growth beyond that which a 16 car train can handle, some accommodation must be made. Potential engineering solutions to the above constraint are discussed below.

Based on our analysis of potential rail freight opportunities and rail/maritime operations in the Port, the Port of New Bedford would be well served in addressing several elements to ensure an ability to grow rail business, as discussed above. The elements are:



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1. Restoring rail connections to former rail served customers (for example Maritime Terminal or American Seafood)
2. Restoring the track south of the currently proposed end of track in order to reach the State Pier with rail, and
3. Reconfigure the main line tracks at and north of the proposed station to accommodate a second track. The reason for this recommendation is two-fold and explained further below.

Extending a second main track from below the station north towards the Wye Track at Nash Road would have three effects, as follows:

- a. This additional track would relieve the train length constraint caused by the short tail track and short run-around track at the Yard in New Bedford (as discussed above),
- b. If designed with a mid-point crossover, could provide an alternative location to store empty cars for the EPA project, freeing up a significant portion of the rail yard for other business opportunities, and
- c. This track would simplify serving the State Pier, obviating the need to move pier traffic into the rail yard and then out again before moving to or from the pier.

If for operating or engineering reasons a second track between the station and Nash Road were deemed not acceptable, adding an additional track(s) at a suitable location north of Nash Road, while creating certain other inefficiencies, could relieve a majority of the concerns raised above. If neither approach described above is feasible, some accommodations at the layover facility could be considered, but at this time we do not think this will be necessary given that it appears likely that at least one, if not both, of the approaches described above should be feasible.

### **Commodity Handling Potential**

A review of common cargoes handled in New England that utilize rail for intermodal moves present a wide range of potential handling opportunities for the Port of New Bedford. The list below summarizes the range of commodities that could be handled on an intermodal basis through the port:

- Manufactured goods
- Minerals, including sand and gravel
- Equipment and machinery
- Chemicals

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April 29, 2011

- Fuels
- Automobiles
- Pulp and paper
- Agricultural products
- Seafood
- Lumber
- Metals, including copper and steel

In addition, the port has the capability to handle project cargo and specialty cargo such as wind turbine components. Most of the commodities can be handled by rail in large quantities. Commodities are more often handled by truck in smaller quantities or if the origin/destination point is near the port. The higher the volume, and the further the O/D point is from the port, the more rail becomes a viable and cost effective option.

Linking port and rail infrastructure improvements will give New Bedford a differentiating element compared to other regional ports of similar size. Such linked improvements allow the port to offer services and achieve market reach that few small to medium sized ports can offer. Harbor improvements such as continued dredging, proposed and existing terminal improvements, and bridge work will make New Bedford more attractive to shippers and receivers. Such land-side improvements undertaken at the same time will leverage the improvements and give New Bedford an infrastructure based competitive advantage in the region. The analysis summarized previously in this report identified a positive economic impact based on job creation related to rail yard development. It also identified a number of commodities which can be handled by rail allowing the port to access areas outside of its immediate service area. For the port to remain successful and sustainable, it must be able to reach beyond the local service area.

An effective rail connection allows the port to develop higher cargo volumes and optimizes terminal utilization, which will reduce per unit or per ton handling costs. In addition, it provides the port with a diverse cargo base which compensates for market cycles that affect revenue. This provides shippers with multiple service options and cost competitive transportation alternatives.



**Town of Canton, Massachusetts**  
**OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN**

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

UPPER MEMORIAL HALL  
801 WASHINGTON STREET  
CANTON, MA 02021

POLICE COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS  
LICENSING BOARD

TEL: (781) 821-5000  
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EMAIL: bfriel@town.canton.ma.us

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR  
WILLIAM T. FRIEL

May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
EOEA, Attn: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, EOEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

RE: South Coast Rail Project  
DEIS/DEIR for EOEA # 14346

Dear Messrs. Anacheke-Nasemann and Sullivan:

The Town of Canton respectfully submits the attached comment letter, prepared on our behalf by McMahon Associates, regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) on the South Coast Rail project proposed by MassDOT dated February 2011 for EOEA # 14346.

It is the Town of Canton's opinion that the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided in the FEIR to properly assess the impacts of the project on the Town of Canton. The attached comment letter provides a more detailed review of the DEIS/DEIR. Several issues have been identified through our review that merit further response from the Proponent in the FEIS/FEIR. These issues include, but are not limited to traffic volumes; capacity analysis; parking; noise, vibration and other abutter impacts; existing and new grade crossings; freight service; and railroad bridges. L-055.01

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project and hope these comments are helpful in your assessment of the impacts of this project.

Sincerely,  
  
William T. Friel  
Town Administrator

Attachment

CC: Canton Board of Selectman

**PRINCIPALS**Joseph W. McMahon, P.E.  
Joseph J. DeSantis, P.E., PTOE  
John S. DePalma  
William T. Steffens  
Casey A. Moore, P.E.  
Gary R. McNaughton, P.E., PTOE**ASSOCIATES**John J. Mitchell, P.E.  
Christopher J. Williams, P.E.  
John F. Yacapsin, P.E.

May 27, 2011

Mr. William T. Friel  
Town of Canton  
801 Washington Street Second Floor  
Canton, MA 02021  
RE: South Coast Rail Project  
DEIS/DEIR for EOE # 14346  
Transportation Peer Review

Dear Mr. Friel:

McMahon Associates (McMahon), on behalf of the Town of Canton, has completed a preliminary transportation review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) on the South Coast Rail project proposed by MassDOT dated February 2011 for EOE # 14346.

Based on our initial review, the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided in the FEIR to properly assess the impacts of the preferred alternative. Below we have provided a detailed review of the transportation study included in the DEIS/DEIR. Several traffic issues have been identified through our review that should merit further response from the Proponent. These issues include, but are not limited to, traffic volumes; capacity analysis; parking; noise, vibration and other abutter impacts; existing and new grade crossings; freight service; and railroad bridges.

**Project Description**

As stated in the DEIS/DEIR, the MBTA completed a Draft EIR in 2000 that analyzed six alternative routes for providing commuter rail service between downtown Boston and the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. This report focused on the three alternatives including:

- 1) Extending the existing MBTA Stoughton Line
- 2) Extending the existing MBTA Middleborough Line
- 3) Providing new service, branching off from the Providence Line near Attleboro.

In 2002, a Final EIR was prepared by the MBTA and on August 30, 2002, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs issues a Final Certificate (Executive Office of Environmental Affairs - EEA) File #10509.

The DEIS/DEIR documents focus on the extension of the Stoughton Line alternative as the preferred MassDOT alternative. This alternative would use the existing Northeast Corridor



from South Station to Canton Junction. From Canton Junction, the existing active Stoughton line would be used to the Stoughton Station. Commuter rail service would be extended, using an out-of-service railroad bed south to New Bedford.

According to the DEIS/DEIR, existing train frequency from Canton Junction to Stoughton Station, along the existing MBTA Commuter Rail alignment, ranges from 17 roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. There is also freight service several times a week between Canton Junction station and Central Street in Stoughton. Proposed operating plans for the Stoughton Alternative would include three peak period trains to each of the terminal stations in New Bedford and Fall River, with a fourth train operating near the peak rush hour period. This equates to approximately one train every forty minutes from Fall River/New Bedford and one every twenty minutes from Taunton northward. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from each of the terminal stations and every ninety minutes from Taunton northward. The DEIS/DEIR states that this translates to nine round trips per weekday operation from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day.

The Stoughton Alternative will include a total of three public grade crossings within the Town of Canton, including Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive. These at-grade crossings are located along the active commuter rail line.

In an effort to clearly identify potential impacts within the Town of Canton, we have separated the areas shown on attached Figure 4.1.54 (Stoughton Alternatives, Stoughton Line Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 1 of 5) into the following sections and discussed in further detail below.

L-055.02

- 1) Canton Junction to Washington Street
- 2) Pine Street to Will Drive

### **Traffic Volumes**

Typically, as part of any project, the most recent existing traffic volumes available are used in determining traffic operations and levels-of-service (LOS) on impacted roadways and intersections. The traffic volumes information included on Table 4.1-13d on page 4.1-31 as part of the DEIS/DEIR contains Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) along the roadways within the Town of Canton for the years 2000 and 2002. These include:

L-055.03

<u>Street</u>	<u>AADT</u>	<u>AADT Year</u>
Washington Street	18,900	2002
Pine Street	4,000	2000
Will Drive	2,000	2002

The traffic information contained in the report is outdated and should be supplemented with current data within Canton including impacted, at-grade intersections as part of the Stoughton

Alternative. We request that additional peak period traffic counts and average daily traffic information be gathered to confirm the volumes presented in the DEIS/DEIR.

L-055.03

### **At-Grade Crossings/Mitigation Improvements**

The three impacted at-grade crossings within Canton (Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive) are currently active rail crossings that would be modified to allow double track operations. Minimal recommended mitigation improvements are being proposed, but the potential impacts on these crossings should be assessed with additional information.

L-055.04

#### Canton Junction to Washington Street

##### *Canton Junction*

Under the Stoughton Alternative, no work is proposed at the Canton Junction Station.

##### *Canton Center*

As identified on page 3-83 and shown on Figure 3.2-29, Canton Center Station is an existing station that would be modified to accommodate a second track. Modifications include construction of two new platforms and changes to the parking layout in the existing lots near the station.

##### *Washington Street*

As shown in Table 4.1-13d, Washington Street showed AADT of approximately 18,900 vehicles in 2002. Recommended mitigation improvements due to the impacts of the extension of Stoughton line at this location include:

- Install a traffic signal pre-emption system at two intersections in proximity of the crossing.

#### Pine Street to Will Drive

##### *Pine Street*

Mitigation includes relocating an existing driveway to the north.

##### *Will Drive*

No mitigation is being proposed at this location.

**Further information should be provided by the Proponent clearly showing the proposed mitigation identified above within the limits of Downtown Area to Will Drive, including the Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive at the at-grade crossings.**



In addition, traffic signal pre-emption/coordination along the Washington Street corridor from Sherman Street to Neponset Street should be provided to address queue lengths and delays.

L-055.04

We also request the Proponent to investigate the possibility of implementing upgraded crossing treatments to eliminate the need for whistles and horns within the town of Canton.

L-055.05

### Capacity Analysis

Independent field observations have been conducted by McMahon during the AM and PM peak periods. We observed queuing and delays at several of the at-grade crossings and adjacent intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR within the Town of Canton. The following is a summary of our observations:

L-055.06

#### Canton Junction to Washington Street

##### *Canton Center/Washington Street*

Existing queuing and delays were observed at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street during the peak periods. The approximate duration for the start to end of the flashing gate operation at the at-grade crossing was approximately 1 -2 minutes. During the time that the train crosses Washington Street during the PM Peak hour, queuing began and continued on both sides of the at-grade crossing for approximately 10-15 minutes after the trains had passed through Downtown. In addition, there are existing striped crosswalks but no signal control to allow pedestrians to cross Washington Street to the Canton Center Station. Based on our experience with traffic operations at MBTA commuter rail stations, there are distinct peaks in entering and exiting traffic associated with each train that stops at a station. In addition, the location of the Canton Fire Department headquarters and station on Revere Street results in emergency response vehicles utilizing Washington Street to the north and south. **The increase in trains and impacts to ridership, discussed later in this letter, as part of the Stoughton Alternative could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times along Washington Street and should be addressed by the Proponent.**

##### *Revere Street/Washington Street*

The impacts of vehicles exiting the Canton Junction and Canton Center Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Washington Street results in impacts to the Washington Street/Revere Street signalized intersection as well the intersections within the Downtown Area. **The increase in trains and impacts to ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times within the Canton Center and Downtown Canton, including Revere Street/Washington Street, during the peak hours and should be addressed by the Proponent.**

*Sherman Street/Washington Street*

The impacts of vehicles exiting the Canton Junction and Canton Center Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Porter Street results in impacts to the Washington Street/Sherman Street signalized intersection as well the intersections within the Downtown Area. **The addition of trains and impacted ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times at the Sherman Street/Washington Street during the peak hours and should be addressed by the Proponent.**

L-055.06

*Washington Street Corridor*

The impacts of vehicles exiting the Canton Junction and Canton Center Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Washington Street resulted in observed impacts to the Washington Street corridor from Sherman Street to Neponset Street. **The addition of trains and impacted ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times along this corridor during the peak hours and should be addressed by the Proponent.**

*Pine Street to Will Drive*

*Pine Street*

The existing intersection on both approaches to the at-grade crossing at Pine Street experience limited queuing during both the AM and PM peak hours.

*Will Drive*

The existing intersection on both approaches to the at-grade crossing at Will Drive experience limited queuing during both the AM and PM peak hours.

**Ridership**

The DEIS/DEIR on page 4.1-10 discusses existing and proposed ridership at the existing stations. It states that "since boardings at existing commuter rail stations located near the ends of the existing Providence and Stoughton Commuter Rail Lines are not expected to increase as a consequence of the alternatives, no traffic analyses, beyond the identification of new grade crossing locations, were completed for existing stations or municipalities with existing stations". **Any potential impacts to parking in the Canton Center/Downtown Area and impacts to ridership need to be fully explained by the Proponent. In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Canton Junction and Canton Center stations as part of the Stoughton Alternative. Any information, including a possible origin/destination study of existing vehicles utilizing these two stations should be provided.**

L-055.07



## Stations

It states on page 3-81 of the DEIS/DEIR that several existing commuter rail stations would be impacted by constructing an additional track along segments of the existing right-of-way. Table 3.2-23 on page 3-82 as shown below provides a summary of new and modified train stations affected as part of the Stoughton Alternative:

<u>Station Name</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Stoughton Alternative</u>
Barrowsville	Norton	New	
Battleship Cove	Fall River	New	X
Canton Center	Canton	Existing	X
Canton Junction	Canton	Existing	
Taunton Depot	Taunton	New	X
Easton Village	Easton	New	X
Fall River Depot	Fall River	New	X
Freetown	Freetown	New	X
King's Highway	New Bedford	New	X
North Easton	Easton/Stoughton	New	X
Mansfield	Mansfield	Existing	
Raynham Place	Raynham	New	X
Sharon	Sharon	Existing	
Stoughton	Stoughton	Existing	X
Taunton (Dean St)	Taunton	New	X
Downtown Taunton Depot	Taunton	New	
Whale's Tooth	New Bedford	New	X

It is stated in the DEIS/DEIR on page 3-82 that "the intended goal that the existing commuter rail station designs would be updated". In addition, proposed high-level platforms would be constructed at a height that is 4 feet above the track level, allowing for level-boarding onto all the commuter rail coaches for a 9-car train set (approximately 800' long). **Any potential impacts to parking in the Canton Center/Downtown Area and impacts to ridership need to be fully explained by the Proponent. In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Canton Junction and Canton Center stations as part of the Stoughton Alternative. We request the Proponent address if new ridership projections will lead to the possibility of future station consolidations or modifications.**

L-055.08

L-055.09

### Safety/Crash Rates

McMahon conducted an independent study regarding accident data for the study area and at-grade intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR. Information was obtained from MassDOT for the most recent three-year period available. This data includes complete yearly accident summaries for 2006, 2007, and 2008. The Accident Summary shown below in Table 1 was prepared to identify potential high accident frequencies at the study area intersections. As shown in the table, 24 accidents were reported over the three year period at the Washington Street and Sherman Street signalized intersection, 24 accidents at the Washington Street and Revere Street signalized intersection, and 9 accidents at the Washington Street and at-grade intersection. **Although we have collected the accident data, it is unclear when the safety threshold at the study area and at-grade intersections is met or if they exceed the average accident rates. A thorough assessment should be provided by the Proponent to ensure that these locations include adequate safety measures.**

L-055.10



## South Coast Rail Accident Summary - Canton

<b>Year</b>	At-Grade/ Washington Street	Route 138 and Revere	Route 138 and Sherman	At-Grade/ Pine Street	At-Grade/ Will Drive
2006	2	7	8	0	0
2007	5	8	10	0	0
2008	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	9	20	24	1	0
<b>Type</b>					
Angle	1	6	8	0	0
Rear-end	5	8	11	0	0
Head-on	0	1	2	0	0
Sideswipe	1	1	1	0	0
Single Vehicle	2	3	0	1	0
Unknown	0	1	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	9	20	24	1	0
<b>Severity</b>					
Property Damage	5	13	19	1	0
Personal Injury	3	5	3	0	0
Fatality	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	2	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	9	20	24	1	0
<b>Weather</b>					
Clear	7	12	15	0	0
Cloudy	1	3	6	1	0
Rain	1	5	2	0	0
Snow	0	0	1	0	0
Ice	0	0	0	0	0
Sleet	0	0	0	0	0
Fog	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	9	20	24	1	0
<b>Time</b>					
7:00 AM to 9:00 AM	1	0	3	0	0
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM	5	13	11	0	0
4:00 PM to 6:00 PM	2	2	4	0	0
6:00 PM to 7:00 AM	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	9	20	24	1	0

### Electrification

Page 3-78 of the DEIS/DEIR discusses the need for a new traction electrification system required to provide electric power to locomotives for the electric commuter rail alternatives. This new system would include traction power systems, overhead catenary, wayside power, signaling, a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system & communications and the return circuits. Specifically, “the new traction electrification system would tie into the NEC electrification system with some modifications to that system. The traction electrification system would provide power to the trains from wayside traction power facilities through an overhead contact system (OCS), which distributes the power to the trains’ pantographs. The pantographs, mounted on the roof of the rolling stock, would collect the electrical power from the OCS through mechanical contact by sliding under the OCS contact wire. The electrical circuit would be completed back to the source substation via multiple return paths, including running rails and static wires”. **The Proponent should provide additional details on the physical improvements, including structures, visual impacts to abutters, and right-of-way impacts associated with the implementation of the new electrification system.**

L-055.11

### Abutter Impacts

The three impacted at-grade crossings within Canton (Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive) are currently active rail crossings that would be modified to allow double track operations. The Stoughton Alternative requires the reconstruction of existing tracks of the Stoughton Line from Canton Junction to Stoughton, a double track for a distance of 3.8 miles, through existing residential and commercial areas. **We request the Proponent provide information regarding the proposed limits of the track layout and proximity to abutters within Canton. In addition, please identify and address any associated vibration and noise impacts to these abutters.**

L-055.12

### Parking

Figure 3.2-29 shows the proposed reconstruction of Canton Center Station due the impacts of the Stoughton Alternative. **We request the Proponent provide additional information related to the revised parking layouts at Canton Center Station, including parking utilization projections, and existing data and any other relevant data associated with operation of these parking lots and abutting roadways. In addition, any direct or indirect impacts to the reconstructed Canton Center Station due to potential changes to parking should be investigated by the Proponent.**

L-055.13

### Peak and Off-Peak Trips

According to the DEIS/DEIR, existing train frequency from Canton Junction Station to Stoughton Station, along the existing MBTA Commuter Rail alignment, ranges from 17

L-055.14



roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. There is also freight service several times a week between Canton Junction station and Central Street in Stoughton. Proposed operating plans for the Stoughton Alternative would include three peak periods trains to each of the terminal station of New Bedford and Fall River with a fourth train operating near the peak rush hour period. This equates to approximately one train every forty minutes from Fall River/New Bedford and one every twenty minutes from Taunton northward. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from each of the terminal stations and every ninety minutes from Taunton northward. The DEIS/DEIR states that this translates to nine round trips per weekday operation from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day. However, if each terminal station is served by four peak/shoulder trains and six off-peak trains, along with one round trip to East Taunton, the total would be 42 trains passing through Canton. **We request the Proponent provide a concise comparison of the number of peak and off-peak trips per each terminal station from Fall River and New Bedford.**

L-055.14

### Freight Service

There is existing freight service several times a week between Canton Junction Station and Central Street in Stoughton. As part of the Stoughton alternative, freight service will operate via Canton Junction through Stoughton, proceeding directly via Taunton to New Bedford or Fall River. As stated in the DEIS/DEIR, the only access to the remaining active freight rail customers on the existing Stoughton Branch is via the Northeast Corridor through Canton Junction. The need to access the high-speed corridor will definitely be impacted by the coming of the high-speed train service. The MBTA may or may not grant a freight carrier access to the Canton area through the proposed reconstructed line between Winter Street, Taunton, and the present location of end-of-track in Stoughton. It is stated that daytime freight service on the line segment between Winter Street and Stoughton is possible but not practical. **We suggest that any impacts of the freight service along the Stoughton line be clarified and safety impacts addressed. In addition, due to the recent accident of a freight train and MBTA Commuter Rail train in the vicinity of the Canton Junction station, any potential safety concerns between freight and passenger trains needs to be addressed.**

L-055.15

### Railroad Bridges

Table 3.2-19 in the DEIS/DEIR provides a list of bridge crossings (both undergrade and overhead) that would require rehabilitation or reconstruction as part of the Stoughton Alternative for the South Coast Rail Project. **Additional specific details regarding the rehabilitation or reconstruction at the existing railroad bridges within the Town of Canton, including Revere Street, Forge Pond, Bolivar Street, Beaver Pond and the historic Canton Viaduct should be provided by the Proponent.**

L-055.16

### **Canton Center Train Station during construction**

Figure 3.2-29 shows the proposed reconstruction of Canton Center Station with the implementation of the Stoughton Alternative. **Any impacts to the Canton Station Train Station during construction, including hours of construction, dust and noise, temporary busing, and parking impacts should be addressed by the Proponent as well as potential parking and traffic operations impacts along the abutting local roadways during construction.**

L-055.17

### **Conclusion**

Based on our initial review and the comments above, the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided by the Proponent in the FEIR to properly assess the impacts. Several issues have been identified through our review that merit further response from the Proponent. These issues include, but are not limited to traffic volumes; capacity analysis; parking; noise, vibration and other abutter impacts; existing and new grade crossings; freight service; and railroad bridges.

If you should have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

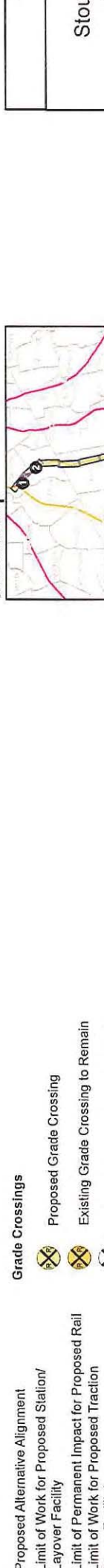
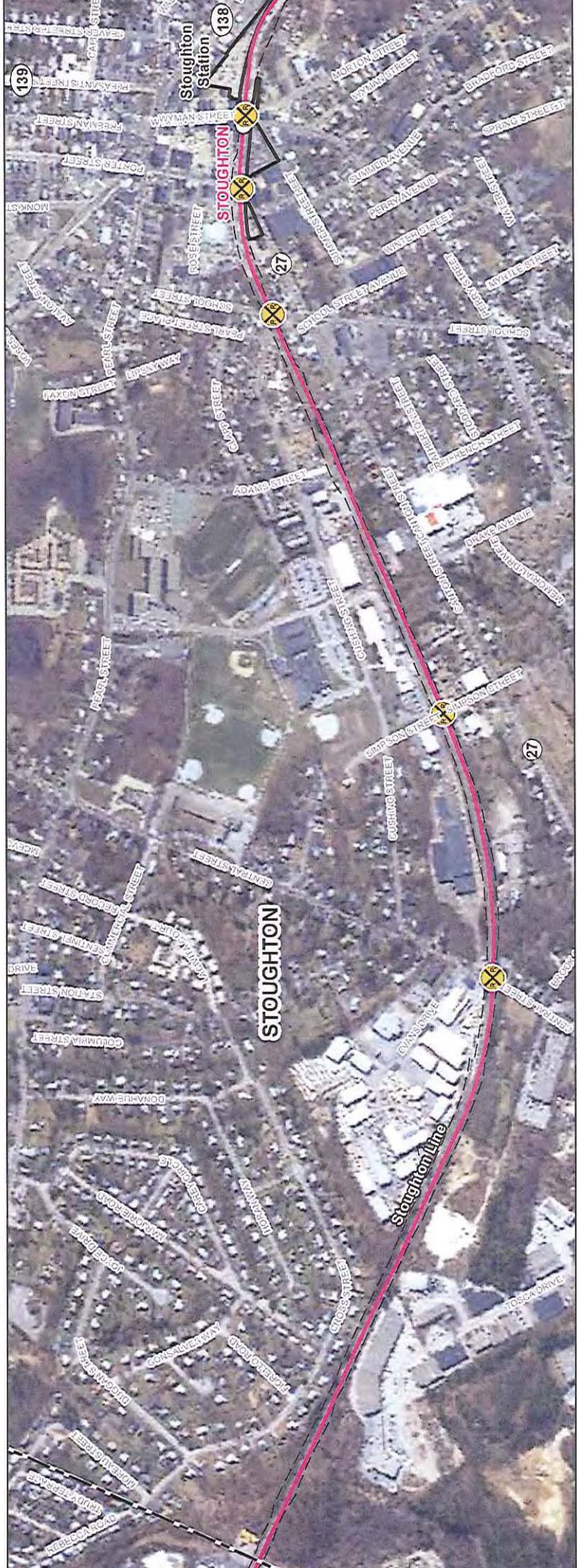


Steven C. Findlen  
Senior Project Manager



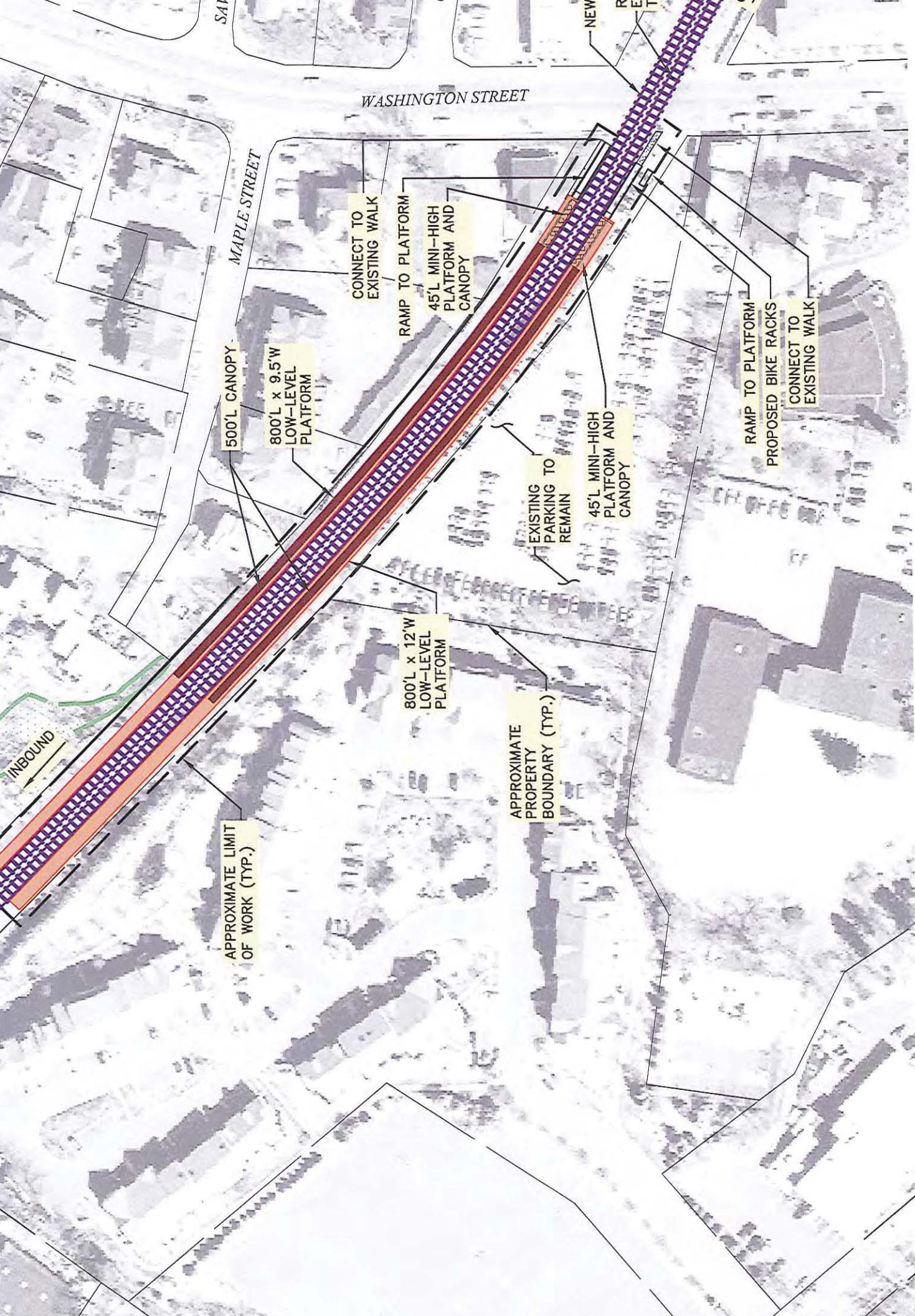
Gary McNaughton, P.E., PTOE  
Vice President & General Manager





- Proposed Alternative Alignment
- Limit of Work for Proposed Station/
- Limit of Permanent Impact for Proposed Rail
- Limit of Work for Proposed Traction
- Grade Crossings
- Proposed Grade Crossing
- Existing Grade Crossing to Remain





**Legend**

Platform

Canopy

Transitional Plaza

Proposed Track

Property

Proposed Roadway

Limit of Work

**Parking Summary Chart**

EXISTING SPACES LOST	-
PROPOSED SPACES ADDED	-



---

**From:** Colton, David [DColton@easton.ma.us]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 04, 2011 2:52 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Cc:** Colleen Corona; Washburn, Brad  
**Subject:** NAE-2007-00698 (South Coast Rail)

Alan Anacheke-Naseman,

After reading the Public Notice I discovered that I may have sent the following request to the wrong email address. I apologize if you got two requests from me.

Given that the DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, we respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. In addition, we are coordinating the comments of over a dozen town boards, committees, and departments so that we may focus the comments of the town and avoid duplication. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments.

E-001.01

Therefore, we ask for an additional 60 days. Thank you for your consideration.

David A Colton  
Town Administrator  
Easton Massachusetts

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TOWN OF EASTON  
MASSACHUSETTS  
*Office of the Town Administrator*

DAVID A. COLTON  
Town Administrator

May 27, 2011

Alan Anachecka-Nasemann  
Senior Project Manager  
Regulatory Division, Permits and Enforcement Branch  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114  
Attn: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Office

Re: EEA # 14346, South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report

Dear Mr. Anachecka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

The Town of Easton is writing to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the South Coast Rail project. While the information provided in the DEIS/DEIR does not seem to clearly demonstrate that project alternatives within the Stoughton corridor are the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), in the DEIS/DEIR, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) identifies the Stoughton family of alternatives as the preferred corridor for the project. The selection of an alternative within this corridor as the LEDPA would have significant impacts on the Town of Easton. As the DEIS/DEIR only provides summarized information for each project alternative, we request that the Final EIS/EIR be required to provide additional, detailed information on project impacts and mitigation measures. Please see below for our comments to specific concerns we have at this point.

L-056.01

Public Safety

Project alternatives within the Stoughton corridor will result in ten new at-grade crossings, many with limited visibility, or line-of-site. These proposed crossings are safety hazards for motorists and pedestrians. During operation, these crossings may

L-056.02



result in emergency response delays. The Town of Easton requests that the proponent provide the following:

L-056.02

- Safety education program - Provide safety information to children within the school system and a general public awareness campaign.
- Pedestrian crossings – Install signage indicating the rail line is active and direct individuals to safe crossing locations.
- Deterrents – Provide creative means of deterring people from dangerous crossings. Recent transit studies demonstrate that people quickly become inured to typical warning signs.
- Safety training for first responders on how to respond to and operate in and around the rail system. This should include not just anticipating a moving train blocking a crossing, but the potential for a train to be stuck at a crossing or the crossing gate to be malfunctioning.

#### Transportation

The DEIS/DEIR proposes two station locations in the Town of Easton, one in North Easton Village and one in North Easton adjacent to the Roche Bros Plaza. Rail service along the Stoughton corridor would also require new grade crossings at Elm Street, Oliver Street, Short Street, Depot Street (Route 123), Purchase Street, Prospect Street, and Foundry Street (Route 106). Additional traffic generated by the new stations and additional vehicle queuing at the new grade crossings would significantly impact the Town's roadway network. In order to help offset these project impacts, the Town of Easton is requesting the following transportation mitigation measures be included in the FEIR/FEIS:

L-056.03

- Upgrade Route 138 (Stoughton town line to Elm Street) – Route 138 is the only way to access the proposed North Easton station. Roadway improvements along this segment of Route 138, which is largely un-signalized and under current traffic conditions has failing Levels of Service, should include signalized intersections at Union Street and Elm Street. Improvements should also include sidewalks and bicycle lanes to enhance pedestrian safety and environmentally responsible transportation options to access the station.
- Upgrade Union Street (Brockton town line to Route 138) - The existing condition of the roadway is adequate for the current amount of daily traffic. However, this roadway will likely serve as a feeder for vehicles coming from the east accessing the North Easton station and will require improvements to accommodate higher amounts of traffic.
- Traffic improvements at the intersection of Route 138 and Route 123 – This gateway intersection is included in the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan as a Priority Development Area. These improvements will enhance the functionality of a critical intersection that will see an increase in traffic due to the proposed station locations.

- Traffic calming measures in North Easton Village - Although the DEIS/DEIR assumes that most riders will either walk or bike to this station, there will be a significant increase in traffic, vehicle queuing, and related parking issues during peak travel times. The DEIS/DEIR does indicate that traffic calming measures will be provided for this location. We request that the FEIR/FEIS provide more detail on these measures.
- Expand public transportation connections – In coordination with regional transit providers (e.g., BAT), MassDOT should work to expand existing routes or create new routes to new rail stations.

L-056.03

#### Visual

The Stoughton corridor bisects both local and national historic districts that are home to many of the Town's most significant historic and architectural landmarks such as the Ames Shovel Works complex, historic railway station, Oakes Ames Memorial Hall and the Ames Free Library. The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.5-39 that, "adverse impacts to the visual environment in the vicinity of the new Easton Village station would be substantial". The FEIR/FEIS should include plans that show a full-grade separation at Main Street with no visual impact resulting from any vertical or horizontal realignment of the tracks and details on how the new station will be sensitively incorporated into the historic fabric of this area. The DEIS/DEIR also acknowledges there will be visual impacts to residential neighborhoods and open spaces along the corridor. While the DEIS/DEIR provides information on how visual impacts may generally be addressed with fencing or grade separation, we request the FEIR/FEIS provide specific measures to address these visual impacts.

L-056.04

#### Noise and Vibration

Portions of the Stoughton corridor run through dense residential neighborhoods in the North Easton Village area. Many homes, commercial and historical properties are immediately adjacent to the ROW or in very close proximity. Further, since the de-activation of the old rail line, new homes have been constructed in close proximity to the abandoned ROW. In order to fully understand and mitigate for noise and vibration impacts, we request the FEIR/FEIS include the following:

L-056.05

- Identify all properties that will be impacted by the noise and vibration generated by the train. The list of impacted areas in the DEIR/DEIS is missing several streets and individual properties.
- Create a baseline assessment of existing historic structures; follow-up with a 5-year assessment to determine if there are vibration impacts
- No whistles at grade crossings
- Provide more detail on the likelihood of freight service, including the hours of operation and potential cargo
- Sound barriers and fences in accordance with Federal guidelines

#### Open Space and Land Acquisition



Table 4.10-16 summarizes the Potential Direct Effects to Protected Open Spaces and ACECs. This table shows no impact in Easton. However, tables 4.10-9, and figures 4.10-7 (a-e) indicate acquisition of Easton public conservation land. We request that the FEIR/FEIS include the following:

L-056.06

- Clarify whether Easton conservation land is intended to be acquired and if so the amount to be acquired.
- Land in an equal amount and of equal ecological value should be provided in exchange for the acquisition.

#### Natural Resources

The DEIR/DEIS states that the Department of Conservation and Recreation describes the Hockomock Swamp ACEC as one of the most extensive inland wildlife habitats in southeastern Massachusetts and includes outstanding Atlantic white cedar swamp and acidic fen wetland communities. The Hockomock Swamp also provides habitat for at least 13 species listed with the NHESP and is listed in the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan as a Priority Protection Area. The DEIS/DEIR identifies a number of direct and indirect impacts that expected from construction activities, restoration of the rail bed and increasing the canopy bed over the rail bed. The impacts would include hydrological changes; habitat and population fragmentation; edge effects; noise and vibration; and restrictions to wildlife movement. Since detailed plans have not been completed, the full impact on habitat and natural resources cannot be fully known. In order to fully understand the impact of the project on habitat and protected species, the FEIR/FEIS needs to include:

L-056.07

- A baseline assessment of habitat value and rare species populations, using the information gathered during the analysis process; follow-up with a five-year study to assess impacts from the rail on those habitat values and species
- Plans that include implementation for appropriate mitigation to restore affected values and populations to baseline conditions

#### Wetlands

The DEIS/DEIR indicates wetlands were evaluated using GIS data layers, orthophotos, and visual inspections of critical areas and indicates more detailed analysis of resource areas will be done prior to the design process. The DEIS/DEIR acknowledges the method used provides a best guess estimate as to wetlands impacts and that full impacts will be assessed during the design process once the LEDPA has been selected.

L-056.08

- A superseding ORAD, issued by DEP in 2000, confirmed some wetland resources areas within the Easton portion of the ROW. The ORAD stated wetlands not directly adjacent to the ROW would need to be addressed during the Notice of Intent process. Therefore, it is expected that the wetland boundaries will be finalized when the Notice of Intent is filed with the Easton Conservation Commission.
- Wetland alteration or loss within the Easton portion of the rail line will be replicated in Easton at a ratio of 2:1.

### Water Resources

The rail line is located immediately adjacent to the Zone I wellhead protection area and is within the Interim Wellhead Protection area and Zone II wellhead protection area of three of the six wells that supply Easton's drinking water. Any adverse impact to these wells could have a devastating effect on the Town's ability to provide an adequate water supply to its residents. Several water bodies within Easton would also be receptors of aerial deposition of diesel exhaust. The FEIR/FEIS should:

L-056.09

- Demonstrate, in detail, how the project will fully comply with Massachusetts Stormwater Management regulations.
- Prohibit the use of herbicides within the Town's Aquifer Protection District.
- Establish a Performance Guarantee against potential releases of Oils or Hazardous Materials that result in the contamination and subsequent disuse of any or all of Easton's drinking water wells. The amount of the guarantee should be equal to the cost of obtaining drinking water from another source (e.g. advancement of new wells; purchase of water from another supplier) and should be increased by an amount annually that reasonably anticipates increases to said cost.
- Provide for a 2-year pre-construction period of water quality testing and analysis to establish baseline conditions of the water bodies that would be receptors of aerial deposition of diesel exhaust. This baseline analysis should be followed by a five-year assessment to determine any impacts.

### Conclusion

The Town of Easton is extremely concerned about the potential impacts of the project alternatives within the preferred Stoughton corridor. As noted above, the preferred alternatives will have significant impacts in regards to public safety and to the Town's natural and built environment. The DEIS/DEIR does not provide sufficient information about the potential impacts of the project, nor does it offer specific mitigation measures to help offset these impacts. We believe these issues should be fully addressed and vetted during the public FEIR/FEIS process.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



David Colton  
Town Administrator

Cc: Ken Kimmell, Commissioner DEP  
Karen Adams, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Kristina Egan, MassDOT



Senator Brian Joyce  
Senator Thomas Kennedy  
State Representative Angelo D'Emilia  
State Representative Geraldine Creedon  
State Representative Christine Canavan  
Easton Board of Selectmen  
Raynham Selectmen  
Stoughton Selectmen

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**From:** leonardflynn@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Monday, May 09, 2011 1:18 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: NRT Newsletter SCR Project 4  
**Attachments:** NRT Newsletter SCR Project 4.doc

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**From:** leonardflynn@verizon.net [mailto:leonardflynn@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 09, 2011 1:04 PM  
**To:** 'marydeeflynn@yahoo.com'  
**Subject:** NRT Newsletter SCR Project 4

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann,

The attached document is a press release I wrote [for](#) the Natural Resources Trust newsletter and the Mansfield Selectmen and Planning Board. I wrote it in my position as the Mansfield Commissioner of SRPEDD and as [a](#) member of the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force. It represents the town's position and the Natural Resources Trust's position on the Project. E-028.01

Leonard Flynn



## **Press Release on South Coast Rail Project and its Impact on Mansfield**

**For decades the citizens of Fall River and New Bedford have been promised commuter rail service. A design was developed and approved in 2002 by the Executive Office of Transportation but never built due to lack of funding. This was one of many attempts over the years to provide the service to Fall River and New Bedford. The justification for the project is not only to provide commuter rail service but also to provide economic stimulus for one of the most economically depressed areas of the state.**

**The current effort of the South Coast Rail Project (SCR) was started in 2005 and has progressed to the point where three of the sixty-four originally proposed routes have been selected; the Stoughton route, the Attleboro bypass route and a bus service to Boston via Route 24. The project is to be federally funded and because of this the Army Corps of Engineers will make the final selection of the route. This decision has been delayed twice by the Corps and is now tentatively scheduled for June, 2010.**

**There were definitive criteria established by the Executive Office of Transportation and Army Corps of Engineers for the selection of the route. The following spread sheets depict the results of extensive research and study by the EOT to evaluate the criteria. This information along with an Environmental Impact Study done by the Corps will be used to determine the route.**

E-028.02

**After reviewing this data it seems obvious to me the Stoughton route is the preferred route but the decision will be made by the Army Corps of Engineers and on their schedule.**

**If the Attleboro Route is selected it will have significant impact on Mansfield. It will require the construction of the Attleboro bypass, a strictly commuter track to connect the Attleboro Secondary Line to the NY/NH Main line corridor in Mansfield. The bypass is three miles long and will run through Norton, Attleboro and Mansfield, connecting to the Main Line just west of Gilbert Street in Mansfield. This third set of tracks will then be added to the existing two sets of tracks on the Main Line to Boston. This will require the taking of land and buildings along the main line from Gilbert Street to the Foxboro town line.**

E-028.03

	Attleboro		Stoughton		Whittenton		Rapid Bus
	Electric	Diesel	Electric	Diesel	Electric	Diesel	
<b>Travel Time to New Bedford</b> (minutes)	75	84	76	85	87	96	103
<b>Travel Time to Fall River</b> (minutes)	72	82	73	83	85	94	91
<b>Total Daily Trips</b>	38	38	38	38	38	38	218
<b>Total Daily New Trips</b>	38	38	2	2	2	2	218
<b>Total Peak Period Departures/Arrivals</b> (each terminal)	3	3	3	3	3	3	8
<b>Peak Period Frequency</b> (minutes)	40	40	40	40	40	40	15
<b>New Daily Boardings</b>	9,360	8,040	9,580	8,140	9,640	8,040	4,200
<b>New Daily Transit Passengers</b>	5,300	4,500	5,900	5,000	5,500	4,600	850
<b>On-Time Performance<sup>1</sup></b>	50%	44%	98%	96%	98%	96%	88% <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These are the On-Time Performance measures for all trains arriving at South Station.

<sup>2</sup> The On-Time Performance measure for the Rapid Bus Alternatives were obtained for the non-holiday weekday peak periods.



It will require the widening of all the bridges and underpasses along the route, the relocation of the train station, land taking in the Great Woods Conservation Area and in a Priority Protection Area between Gilbert Street and the Attleboro and Norton town lines. The bridges that will be widened are at North Main Street, Route 106, Route 140, School Street, Elm Street and Gilbert Street. This construction will take years to complete, cause unimaginable traffic problems for years throughout Mansfield and will not provide any benefit to the town.

The South Coast Rail Project is an investment in future transportation infrastructure that could be funded with stimulus money and provide future economic and environmental benefits for all of South East Massachusetts.

For a comprehensive description of the project go to the South Coast Rail web page.

Leonard Flynn

Mansfield Commissioner SRPEDD

Commuter Rail Task Force

E-028.03





# TOWN OF NORTON

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

70 EAST MAIN STREET

MUNICIPAL CENTER, NORTON, MASS. 02766

TELEPHONE (508) 285-0210

May 19, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NE District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Re: South Coast Rail Project –  
Comment for the  
Draft EIS/EIR of February 2011

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann:

The Town of Norton has been at the forefront of the campaign opposing the Attleboro Alternative for South Coast Rail since 1995. We have worked with the other communities who would be impacted by this ill-advised route, including Attleboro, Mansfield, and Taunton. The Norton Board of Selectmen, Mansfield Board of Selectmen, as well as the Mayors and City Councilors of Attleboro and Taunton, and elected representatives in the State House have gone on record repeatedly voicing solidarity in our position that the Attleboro Alternative should be eliminated as a route for South Coast Rail.

L-031.01

The Norton Board of Selectmen has also been consistent in supporting the restoration of commuter rail service to New Bedford, Fall River, and our sister city of Taunton via the Original (Straight) Stoughton Route. We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR and optimistic that the final reports will eliminate the Attleboro Alternative from any further consideration.

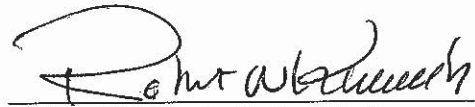
L-031.02

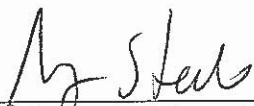
MAY24'11 REG DIV

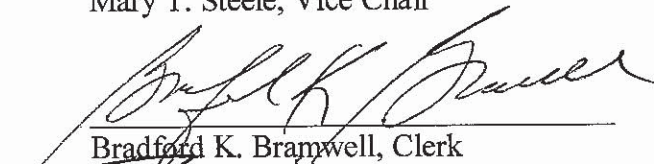
Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., and Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Page 2  
May 19, 2011


The Norton Board of Selectmen appreciates this opportunity for input. We expect Heather Graf, our appointed representative to the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force, will review the DEIS/DEIR and comment further.

TOWN OF NORTON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN, BY:

  
Robert W. Kimball, Jr., Chairman

  
Mary T. Steele, Vice Chair

  
Bradford K. Bramwell, Clerk

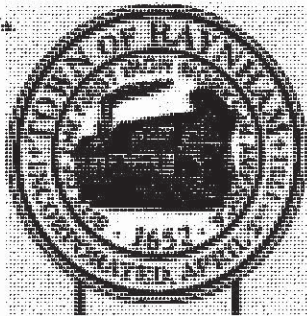
  
Robert S. Salvo, Sr.

  
Timothy R. Giblin

mtb

pc: Ms. Kristina Eagan  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Ten Park Plaza, Room 4150  
Boston, MA 02116





www.town.raynham.ma.  
us

**TOWN OF RAYNHAM**  
**SELECTMEN AND BOARD OF HEALTH**  
558 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
RAYNHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02767  
TEL#: (508) 824-2707  
Board of Health: (508) 824-2766  
FAX#: (508) 823-1812

May 24, 2011

Alan Anacheka –Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Comments on the DEIS/DEIR – South Coast Rail Project  
Department of the Army Permit # NAE-2007-00698  
EOEEA # 14346

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

Enclosed please find a list of mitigation measures which the town of Raynham believes would be necessary should the so-called Stoughton Alternative be chosen as the preferred route. L-042.01

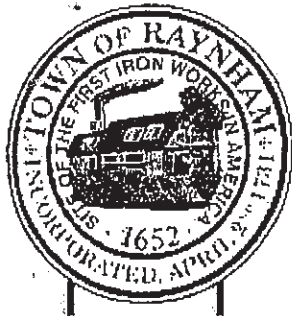
Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
Randall A. Buckner  
Town Administrator

encl: (1)

MAY26'11 REG DIV



TOWN OF RAYNHAM  
SELECTMEN AND BOARD OF HEALTH  
558 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
RAYNHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02767  
TEL.#: (508) 824-2707  
Board of Health: (508) 824-2766  
FAX#: (508) 823-1812

**PROPOSED COMMUTER RAIL MITIGATION MEASURES**  
**For Town of Raynham**  
**South Coast Rail Project**

1. Commuter rail stop that is compatible with the Town and accessible to residents. | L-042.02
2. No whistles at grade crossings. | L-042.03
3. Road improvements to Rt. 138 to be engineered, permitted and constructed by the State. | L-042.04
4. Sound barriers in accordance with Federal guidelines to protect residences along the route. | L-042.05
5. Any wetland restoration, mitigation and replication required must be within the Town of Raynham. | L-042.06
6. Mitigation for homeowners whose property values are negatively affected by proximity of the rail line in the form of full market value. | L-042.07
7. Public safety facility in North Raynham. | L-042.08
8. Safety education program for school children in public schools. | L-042.09
9. Mitigation for North Raynham Water District for any negative effects on wells. | L-042.10
10. If chosen route crosses Route 138, preference is for the train to pass underneath Route 138 rather than at-grade. | L-042.11

Adopted by unanimous vote of the Board of Selectmen on September 16, 2008.





**KOPELMAN AND PAIGE, P.C.**  
*The Leader in Municipal Law*

101 Arch Street  
Boston, MA 02110  
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April 12, 2011

**George X. Pucci**  
gpucci@k-plaw.com  
(617) 654-1718

**BY FACSIMILE, ELECTRONIC  
AND FIRST CLASS MAIL**

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Re: South Coast Rail Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report  
EEA File #14346; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698  
(Town of Stoughton)

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Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

This firm serves as Town Counsel to the Town of Stoughton (the "Town") and represents the Town with respect to the preparation and submission of comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIS/DEIR") for the South Coast Rail Project proposed by MassDOT.

As you know, the DEIS/DEIR consists of 2,500 pages and includes voluminous data and highly complex technical analysis on a myriad of very important issues. This complex information, published for the first time at the end of March, 2011, has been several years in the making. We respectfully suggest that a public comment period of only two months on such a highly complex document is inadequate and not in the public interest. L-004.01

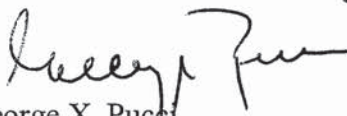
Moreover, the selection of the "Stoughton Alternative" as the preferred alternative for the project raises enormous concerns for the Town with respect to a number of issues within the USACE's jurisdiction, including public safety, land use planning, environmental, historic properties, property ownership, aesthetics and economic concerns, and the needs and welfare of its residents. The Town respectfully requests a 120-day extension of the May 27, 2011 public comment deadline so that it has sufficient time to evaluate the report with appropriate consultants and submit meaningful comments.

**KOPELMAN AND PAIGE, P.C.**

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
April 12, 2011  
Page 2

Thank you very much for your consideration of the Town's request.

Very truly yours,



George X. Pucci

GXP/man

cc: Town Manager  
Secretary Richard Sullivan,  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (by electronic and first class mail)  
Ms. Kristina Egan, Director, South Coast Rail, MassDOT

423270/28514/0001





**KOPELMAN AND PAIGE, P.C.**  
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May 9, 2011

**George X. Pucci**  
gpucci@k-plaw.com  
(617) 654-1718

BY ELECTRONIC AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Secretary Richard Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and  
Environmental Affairs Division  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Re: South Coast Rail Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report  
EEA File #14346; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698  
(Town of Stoughton)

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Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

As previously advised, this firm represents the Town of Stoughton with respect to the preparation and submission of comments on the 2500-page Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIS/DEIR") for the South Coast Rail Project proposed by MassDOT.

As you know, the DEIS/DEIR identifies the "Stoughton Alternative" as the preferred alternative for the project.

I previously requested an extension of the public comment period on the DEIS/DEIR, currently set to expire on May 27, 2011. An extension has also been requested by State Senator Brian A. Joyce, and State Representatives, William C. Galvin and Louis L. Kafka, by correspondence dated April 5, 2011.

On May 5, 2011, State Senator Joyce hosted a meeting to discuss the project with representatives of all interested parties in the "Stoughton Alternative," including State legislators for, and local officials from, the Towns of Stoughton, Easton, Canton, and Raynham, the project proponent, the Governor's office, and the EOEEA. My client again requested an extension of public comment deadline on the DEIS/DEIR by 90 days, up to and including August 27, 2011, which request was supported by the other potentially affected communities present.

I would appreciate if you would be kind enough to reconsider our request for an extension of the public comment period on the grounds set forth in my prior letter and in consideration of the issues discussed on May 5, 2011 and have someone from your staff contact me to confirm whether

L-020.01

**KOPELMAN AND PAIGE, P.C.**

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
May 9, 2011  
Page 2

the extension will be granted. I can be reached either by return mail, or by e-mail at [gpucci@k-plaw.com](mailto:gpucci@k-plaw.com) or by telephone at (617) 654-1718.

Thank you very much for your courtesy and cooperation in this matter.

Very truly yours,

  
George X. Pucci

GXP/man

cc: Town Manager  
Ms. Kristina Egan, Director, South Coast Rail, MassDOT

423270/28514/0001





**KOPELMAN AND PAIGE, P.C.**  
*The Leader in Municipal Law*

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May 27, 2011

**George X. Pucci**  
gpucci@k-plaw.com  
(617) 654-1718

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL and  
BY HAND DELIVERY

Secretary Richard Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and  
Environmental Affairs Division  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Re: South Coast Rail Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report  
EEA File #14346; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698  
(Town of Stoughton)

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Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

As previously advised, this firm serves as Town Counsel to the Town of Stoughton and represents the Town with regard to the proposed South Coast Rail Project. This shall serve as the Town's written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIS/DEIR") issued on March 18, 2011.

I. DENIAL OF REASONABLE EXTENSION OF PUBLIC COMMENT REVIEW PERIOD

At the outset, the Town respectfully contends that it was unreasonable that the project proponent and the state and federal permitting authorities, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs ("EOEEA") and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("USACE"), were unwilling to even entertain a reasonable extension of the public comment deadline of May 27, 2011.

L-079.01

It is simply not reasonable to expect meaningful public comment on the complex issues described in the 2500-page DEIS/DEIR within such a short timeframe. The denial of a reasonable extension precludes effective expert analysis and/or peer review of the voluminous data and underlying methodology upon which the project proponent claims a compelling need for this staggeringly expensive public project and hinders responsible and objective scrutiny of the project.

The Town reserves the right to challenge the arbitrary and capricious nature of the decision denying a reasonable extension of the public comment period and the substantial rights affected



Secretary Richard Sullivan  
Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
May 27, 2011  
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thereby, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to obtain expert analysis and/or peer review of the methodology upon which the project proponent claims that this project serves some compelling public need, that such need outweighs the adverse effects of the project, and that such adverse effects can be adequately mitigated.

L-079.01

Notwithstanding the foregoing reservation of rights, the Town submits these written comments to urge the USACE to deny approval of the "Stoughton Alternative" as contrary to the public interest, and for the EOEEA to determine that the DEIS/DEIR is inadequate and require a supplemental draft, pursuant to 301 CMR §11.08(8)(b), addressing the issues noted below.

L-079.02

## II. PROJECT PURPOSE – NO COMPELLING NEED

The stated purpose of the South Coast Rail project is unsound. The alleged purpose of the project is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility." However, there is no relevant or sound demographic or statistical analysis to conclude that there is a substantial Boston commuting market located in the Fall River/New Bedford area, and no basis to conclude that there is any compelling need for commuter rail service between these two widely disparate regions.

L-079.03

Furthermore, there is no basis to conclude that "regional mobility" will be substantially improved by the extension of the commuter rail through the Town of Stoughton and points south to Fall River/New Bedford, as the extension is unlikely to do anything other than draw riders from other means of public transportation without any appreciable reduction in vehicle miles traveled.

L-079.04

Means of Transportation to Work data for towns along the Old Colony Middleborough/Lakeville extension and along the Greenbush line demonstrate the actual impact of the commuter rail on commuting patterns for residents. The Middleborough/Lakeville line opened in 1997. As of the 1990 Census, almost no residents of Middleborough or Lakeville used the commuter rail as a way to get to work. By the 2000 Census, 2.0% of Lakeville residents and 2.6% of Middleborough residents used the commuter rail to get to work. From 2000 until the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, which is the most recent data available, the use of the rail as a means of transportation to work has declined on a percentage basis in some areas.

In Lakeville, the increase was nominal up 0.2%, to 2.2%. In Middleborough, usage declined based on those surveyed to 1.9%. These statistics are very similar to those for towns located along the newly constructed Greenbush line, which saw a ridership of the commuter rail increase of only 1.9% to 2.2% of those surveyed between the opening of the Greenbush line and the most recent Census data from the 2005-2009 American Community Surveys.

Moreover, approximately 25% of these riders switched to the commuter rail from another means of public transportation. Thus, these statistics indicate that the extension or re-opening of a



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L-079.04

rail line not only does not drive significant increases in rail ridership, but it also merely results in more competition to other modes of public transportation, with no appreciable reduction in the amount of vehicle miles traveled on the roadways of the Commonwealth.

Further, Journey to Work data from the 2000 Census, which is the most recent available at a detailed level, as well as Wage and Employment data from the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development for Fall River and New Bedford indicate that less than 2.0% (695 New Bedford residents and 646 Fall River residents) of residents of either city work in Boston and, therefore, would benefit from the rail extension and the opportunity to use the commuter rail to travel to work. The majority of residents of these two cities work in Fall River, New Bedford, Rhode Island, and other car commuting locations which would not be served by the South Coast Rail extension.

L-079.05

The 2000 Journey to Work data correlates reasonably well with the Journey to Work data from the American Community Survey of 2005-2009 which indicates that 74.9% of Fall River residents and 80.7% of New Bedford residents surveyed work within the same county in which they live. In New Bedford, the primary industries of employment are Health Care and Social Assistance (8,462), Manufacturing (6,664), Educational Services (2,811), Retail Trade (2,596), and Accommodation and Food Services (2,307). These primary employers are also some of the lowest paying industries based on the Labor Department data.

Fall River's primary employment industries are the same as those of New Bedford. The industries that employed the most residents of Fall River as of end of year 2009 are Health Care and Social Assistance (10,193), Manufacturing (4,644), Retail Trade (3,187), Educational Services (2,390), and Accommodation and Food Services (2,333). As with New Bedford, these primary employers are also some of the lowest paying industries based on the Labor Department data.

While the project proponent argues that the lack of public transit to Boston "may" impact the economic development of the New Bedford/Fall River area, the primary industries that residents of Fall River and New Bedford work in, more logically lead to the conclusion that the addition of public transportation by extending the South Coast rail will make a marginal difference in the number of people commuting to Boston for work. Based on the Journey to Work data that shows that a limited number of people from the region travel to Boston for work, the state of the Boston commercial market, and the limited success other new rail lines have had in attracting ridership, there is no evidence that the extension of the South Coast line will spur significant ridership from Bristol County nor will it drive any significant employment opportunities.

The proponents of South Coast Rail argue that ridership along the Stoughton line will increase by extending the line and will provide a means of access to work for New Bedford and Fall River residents. As noted above, however, there is no evidence to support this argument based on Transportation to Work data for residents of other towns where a rail line has recently been opened.

L-079.06



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L-079.06

Means of Transportation to Work data for towns along the Old Colony Middleborough/Lakeville extension and along the Greenbush line estimate the impact of the commuter rail on commuting patterns for residents. These data show at most a 2.2% increase in commuter rail use as a means of transportation to work since the rail opened for both the Old Colony and Greenbush lines. On the Old Colony line, the use of the rail as a means of transportation to work has declined on a percentage basis in some areas as of the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

Again, these statistics plainly indicate that the extension or re-opening of a rail line does not drive significant increases in rail ridership.

### III. ADVERSE IMPACTS ON STOUGHTON

#### A. Economic Impact

The South Coast Rail Plan inaccurately suggests that the rail expansion will increase property values in the affected communities in addition to other economic benefits such as new development. The project proponent also makes misplaced claims of fulfilling “smart growth” concepts such as “transit-oriented” development. These claims are entirely illusory as there is not a single concrete instance of a vibrant economic community arising around the vicinity of a newly constructed rail line or train station in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Commuter rail locations are exactly that, locations for commuters to park their cars and travel somewhere else. The noise and vibration of commuter trains, and the splitting up of roadways and sidewalks along the rail crossings, lessens the economic value of businesses and residences located in close proximity to rail lines and train stations.

L-079.07

The blighted condition of the areas around the location of the train station in downtown Stoughton is instructive. The location of the rail line into downtown Stoughton has never been conducive to economic development of the downtown. In fact, the MBTA has allowed the historic train station to fall into an abandoned state of disrepair. The parking areas follow no logical or conducive patterns toward aesthetics or reasonably considered traffic flow or development design standards. The limited residential and commercial uses which exist in downtown Stoughton exist despite the existence of the commuter rail station, and only because of the dogged determination of the local residents and business owners in trying to maintain a viable downtown district.

For Stoughton, the Corridor Plan projects 1,510 new dwelling units and 425,000 square feet of commercial development within one mile of the station in the next 20 years resulting from the rail line extension. However, this projection is plainly refuted by the damage the rail line into downtown Stoughton has already caused and is also refuted by the experience of the new constructed Greenbush line through Hingham, where there has been no development anywhere near the scale of the Corridor Plan’s projections.



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The reality of Stoughton's current development patterns with the commuter rail already in existence shows that development continues to occur predominantly in highway-accessible locations. Again, the existing rail line into Stoughton only detracts from viable thriving residential or commercial uses in the downtown. There is no basis to conclude that extending the rail line through Stoughton would significantly shift current development patterns unless financial incentives are provided to encourage development in the downtown.

L-079.07

B. Stoughton Ridership and Environmental Impacts

MassDOT predicts that the South Coast extension will induce people to give up their cars to ride the train. Current ridership numbers refute that claim. Approximately 5.0% (600+/- people) of Stoughton residents surveyed in the American Community Surveys of 2005 to 2009 reported use of public transportation as their means of transportation to work, approximately 75% of which use the commuter rail. The majority – 83% (10,600 +/- people) – drove to work.

L-079.08

Data from the US Census indicate that public transportation ridership in Stoughton has decreased between 2000 and 2010 despite increases in population. A review of primary workplace locations for Stoughton residents underscores that while almost 2,700 Stoughton residents worked in Boston as of 2000, the balance – more than 11,000 people - work in car commuting locations such as Canton, Brockton, Quincy, and Norwood.

Evidence from the Greenbush line shows that the MBTA has failed to meet its ridership projections on that line and that a number of the Greenbush line riders have switched from using the commuter ferry, not from driving their cars. A survey of Greenbush line riders in 2009 found that 46.6% had switched to the commuter rail from the boat while 44.5% previously drove to Boston. David Luberoff, executive director of the Rappaport Institute at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, whose institute has studied the effect of commuter rail on Greater Boston, said that many people who choose to ride trains had been in carpools before, not driving alone into Boston. "Given that we're talking about a couple of thousand people, the impact on congestion will be completely minimal," he said.

L-079.09

According to studies of the Central Transportation Planning Staff report in March, 2010, Greenbush commuter rail ridership is approximately 40% less than that projected.

The likely impact of the South Coast rail extension on decreasing highway traffic around Stoughton appears limited, especially given that ridership in Stoughton has been declining in recent years. Further, new stations south of Stoughton will attract people from Easton and Raynham and other surrounding towns who may currently commute from Stoughton away. The declining ridership of existing Stoughton residents coupled with existing riders being drawn away by more southerly station stops means that the extension of the South Coast rail will result in fewer people in downtown Stoughton but more intense train traffic through town, only now much more frequent and

L-079.10



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L-079.10

intense, in both directions.

C. Stoughton Location within the Region

Stoughton is located in Norfolk County, on the border with Plymouth County. It is bordered by the town of Sharon to the west, Canton to the north, Randolph to the northeast, Avon to the east, and Brockton and Easton to the south. Stoughton is 5 miles north of Brockton, 16 miles north of Taunton, 17 miles south of Boston, and approximately 37 miles from Providence. Stoughton is strategically located south of Boston between State Route 128 and Interstate 495, the inner and outer loops around Boston. State Routes 3, 24 and 28 provide east access to the airport, port and intermodal facilities of Boston and Providence. Other major highways serving the Town include State Routes 27, 138 and 139. Commuter rail service is available in downtown Stoughton to Back Bay Station and South Station in Boston. Stoughton is also a member of the Brockton Area Transit Authority ("BAT") which provides fixed route bus service between Brockton and Stoughton.

Stoughton was incorporated as a town in 1726. Today the community is primarily residential, but there remain a number of former mills and industrial sites around town, especially along the rail lines, as well as significant retail development along the Route 24 corridor. Downtown Stoughton has a number of small commercial uses. There are also a variety of public services within the immediate surrounding area, including Stoughton Town Hall and the Stoughton Public Library, Shaw's Supermarket, the U.S. post office, police station, fire station, and a senior citizens' center. There are also a large number of churches and other religious and cultural institutions in the downtown and immediately surrounding areas.

There is a large, recently developed retail shopping center located in North Stoughton called the Shoppes at Page Point which is anchored by Target. Commercial development in Stoughton has concentrated in the eastern portion of the Town near Route 24 where there are large commercial uses, such as an IKEA, Boston Interiors, Bob's Discount Furniture, Kohl's, BJ's, Olive Garden, and Marriott Courtyard, among others. Stoughton has experienced significant multi-family rental property development as well in recent years, especially in North Stoughton, West Stoughton, and on the Easton town line.

The Town of Stoughton's population increased by about 4,050 people between the 2000 and 2010 Census, with an estimated increase of 1,564 households over the period. This correlates with the amount of new development that has been occurring in Stoughton, primarily in rental housing but also some single-family and condominium homes. Much of the new development has been occurring in North Stoughton, West Stoughton, and on the Easton town line, not in Stoughton's downtown.

L-079.11

The local effect of the recent state and national housing recession can be seen in the number of units sold and their median price in the last few years. Sales prices for single-family and



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condominium sales in Stoughton increased for single-family homes between 1999 and 2005, but then declined steadily through 2009. Condominium prices increased between 1999 and 2006 and then declined through 2010. Single-family sale prices in Stoughton rebounded in 2010 but whether that trend will continue or if condominium prices will rebound is unclear from year to date data.

The number of sales has also fluctuated over the past 10 years, although after peaking in 2004 for single-family homes and in 2005 for condominiums the number of sales declined through 2007 for single-families and 2008 for condominiums. The number of single-family sales rebounded in 2008 and 2009 but fell again in 2010, while the number of condominium sales has held relatively steady since 2008.

#### D. Stoughton Rail Usage Trends

According to the MBTA, there is capacity for 333 cars at the Stoughton parking lot and it is approximately 70% full on any given day. This means 235 to 250+/- people park and ride. The MBTA reported 1,000+/- inbound passengers from Stoughton on a one day audit that occurred in February 2009. These 1,000 passengers represent about 45% of the peak inbound travelers alighting at Ruggles, Back Bay, and South Station according to MBTA 2010 audit data, as follows:

#### **Fall 2010 Peak Morning Alightings – Stoughton Line**

<u>Train #</u>	<u>South Station</u>	<u>Back Bay</u>	<u>Ruggles</u>	<u>Total</u>
902	209	199	NA	408
904	381	292	NA	673
906	391	257	128	776
910	186	180	NA	366

#### **Fall 2010 Peak Period Evening Boardings – Stoughton Line**

<u>Train #</u>	<u>South Station</u>	<u>Back Bay</u>	<u>Ruggles</u>	<u>Total</u>
917	204	154	54	412
919	294	197	58	549
921	588	220	56	864
923	363	172	49	584
925	154	101	30	285

Approximately 5.0% (600+/- people) of Stoughton residents surveyed in the American Community Surveys of 2005 to 2009, which is the most recent data of this type available, reported use of public transportation as a means of transportation to work. Of these people, 74% to 77% reported using the commuter rail. This amounts to an average of 470+/- Stoughton riders per day in 2010. Data from the 2000 Census show some 950+/- Stoughton riders, indicating that ridership

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decreased between 2000 and 2010 despite increases in population. The majority of the residents surveyed – 83% (10,600 +/- people) – drove to work.

Journey to Work data from the 2000 Census, which is the most recent available, show that Stoughton residents work primarily in car-oriented destinations, apart from those that travel to Boston. As shown in the table to follow, while almost 2,700 Stoughton residents worked in Boston, the balance – more than 11,000 people - work in car commuting locations such as Canton, Brockton, Quincy, and Norwood. This correlates with the Means of Transportation to Work data, which shows 83% of Stoughton residents driving to work.

<u>Workplace Location</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Stoughton	2,661
Boston	2,680
Canton	1,220
Brockton	822
Quincy	627
Norwood	450
Randolph	362
Braintree	305
Avon	299
Easton	278
Dedham	275
Cambridge	253
Newton	239
Waltham	185
Westwood	167
Mansfield	161
Foxborough	145
Needham	140
Walpole	140
Weymouth	124
Sharon	114
Wellesley	107
Rhode Island	95

While Stoughton's population increased from 2000 to 2010, the majority of residential development in Stoughton occurred in more suburban settings and highway accessible locations, from North Stoughton to West Stoughton to the Easton line, as shown in the table to follow. Little residential development has occurred downtown and the fact that there is walkable access to public transportation is not a driving force in development patterns in Stoughton. As a result, extending the commuter rail through Stoughton is unlikely to cause any significant increase in housing

L-079.12



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development in Stoughton's downtown or in commuter rail usage. Even with reasonable population growth in Stoughton, public transit usage declined, another indication that extending the line will not benefit Stoughton.

L-079.12

<u>Development Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Unit Type</u>
Quail Run	12 Buckley Road	132	Apt
Alta at India Woods	30 Stage Coach Road	154	Apt
Villages at Ames Pond	1400 West St	40	Condo
Pond View Village	473 Turnpike St	72	SF
The Lodge	400 Technology Dr	240	Apt
Woodbridge	Mill & Central St	176	Apt
Goddard Highlands	39 Kelsey Dr	104	SF
Downtown Stoughton		<u>14</u>	Condo
Total		932	

There is no evidence to support an increase in Stoughton based ridership, or substantially increased ridership as the result of additional stations being constructed south of Stoughton. Greenbush line Journey to Work data indicates that since the Greenbush line began running the number of commuter rail riders has increased while the number of ferry boat riders has decreased. The MBTA has failed to meet its ridership projections on the Greenbush line. As of October 2010, the MBTA reported an average of 2,133 weekday customers rode the Greenbush line toward Boston, which is about half the 4,200 riders that had been projected within three to five years of opening Greenbush. In addition, a number of Greenbush line riders are former commuter ferry riders, which has seen ridership drop 25% since the Greenbush line opened.

E. Crossings/Depression of Rail Line

There are five existing street crossings in use along the rail line in Stoughton, with already unacceptably problematic safety and traffic issues which will become insurmountable by the increased intensity of use proposed by the South Coast Rail Project. There are three additional long-inactive crossings which the project proponent seeks to add to the line to create a total of eight at-grade street crossings, posing yet more problems once the new line is constructed and up and running.

L-079.13

The grade crossings at issue are at Central Street, Simpson Street, School Street, Porter Street, Wyman Street, Brock Street, Plain Street, and Morton Street. Approximately 2,000 children are going in and out of the schools located in close proximity to the grade crossing at Simpson Street during rush hour times of the morning and afternoon. Traffic ties up in the area and children also cross the rail line on foot. The proposed increased intensity of use, with trains traveling much more frequently in both directions and at greater speeds, poses unacceptable safety issues which the project proponent wholly fails to address in the DEIS/DEIR.



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Further, the School Street, Porter Street, and Wyman Street intersections are already at a failing level in terms of safety and traffic congestion.

L-079.13

The DEIS/DEIR is entirely lacking in sufficient information to properly assess and mitigate the impacts caused by the proposed dramatic increase in the intensity of use. For instance, the traffic information contained in the report is outdated and must be supplemented with meaningful existing data. The existing and proposed new at-grade crossings will require additional traffic operational analysis, including delays and queue lengths in order to assess their impacts.

Additional information related to the revised parking layouts in the downtown area, including parking utilization projections, and existing data should also be provided. Further details regarding the proposed closing of Morton Street and the private driveways to the south as well as the bypass roadway to be constructed to the private grade separated crossing on Topham Farm Road must also be provided.

L-079.14

Further, the report is wholly lacking in any reasonable assessment of the impact of freight service along the Stoughton line. These issues must be clarified and safety impacts addressed.

L-079.15

Traffic engineering issues are more fully addressed in the report of the Town's traffic engineering consultant, McMahon Associates, Inc., which is submitted herewith and incorporated by reference.

Considering the traffic safety and congestion issues involved in this project proposal and sound municipal land use planning principles, the only viable option to reasonably mitigate the increased intensity of use contemplated by this project proposal is to depress the rail line from the Simpson Street crossing in the vicinity of the schools into the area of the existing station in the downtown area at Wyman Street. The topography in this area is favorable to a reasonably inexpensive depression of the line in this area. If the project proponent is permitted to proceed with this project, it must be ordered to provide a viable plan for construction of a depressed rail line in order to adequately mitigate the adverse effects that the increased intensity of use will have upon the Town of Stoughton.

L-079.16

F. Electric

The proposal to consider using an electrified rail line through the Town of Stoughton is wholly unacceptable. As acknowledged by the project proponent, the overhead electrical contact system would consist of a network of catenary wires that distribute power from the traction power system to the electric locomotives. The system would have a contact wire and a messenger wire strung above every electrified track in the system with negative feeder wires and static wires and supporting structures to hold the catenary wire in place.

L-079.17



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The massive support system for the catenary would consist of pole structures with foundations, poles, guys, insulators, brackets, cantilevers, and other assemblies and components. The catenary supports would consist of single track cantilever poles, twin track structures, and multiple track portals.

L-079.17

As the project proponent well knows, this massive, ugly, and dangerous infrastructure would split the entire Town of Stoughton in two, both through its already congested downtown area and through open space and residential areas. No city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has ever been victimized by any similar proposal. The project proponent must therefore voluntarily dismiss this alternative or be ordered to do so.

G. Other Adverse Effects

On the issue of adverse effects, it is also important to note that the Stoughton Alternative, both electric and diesel, received a grade of "C" on the category of permanent loss of interior wetlands and received grades of "F" and "D" respectively on the adverse impact upon protected open space. The Stoughton Alternative also received grades of "F" on the category of required property acquisition and received grades of "D" on the category of municipal tax loss.

L-079.18

The project proponent must be required to provide adequate mitigation of such further adverse effects, and must also be ordered to provide adequate analysis of proposed mitigation of the adverse effects the project shall have on historic, cultural and religious uses in the vicinity of the rail line, and must be ordered to more fully assess hazardous materials issues related to this project, including two hazardous waste facilities located within steps of the rail line.

The potential financial costs of the South Coast Rail Extension to the Town will be extraordinary, requiring that the project proponent reserve funds to ensure adequate mitigation during construction, including, but not limited to:

L-079.19

- the reimbursement for the cost of experts such as engineers and other professionals in planning for the future infrastructure requirements that will go under the rail line in order to insure that the underground sleeves that will hold the sewer, water, and other infrastructure are of sufficient size, as well as ensuring that there is adequate provision for future surface crossings such as sidewalks;
- the reimbursement for the cost of a full time engineer and other specific consultants during the initial planning, design, construction, and post-construction phases of the project to:
  - review the 25%, 50% 75% and final design drawings;
  - review the proposed plans for the impact of drainage on abutting properties;
  - monitor the construction progress and review any changes;

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- act as liaison with the MBTA and contractor and attend meetings with the MBTA, contractor, and community groups;
- review the adequacy and proper protection standards for historic districts and conservation areas;
- review the adequacy and standards for sound mitigation, security fencing and visual screening for residential, commercial, and other properties abutting the rail line; and
- review the adequacy and design standards for the MBTA improvements to the downtown area and reuse of the existing MBTA parking areas.

L-079.19

Assuming a four-year design to completion timeframe, a reasonably estimated out of pocket cost to the Town of Stoughton would be in the range of \$750,000 for the Project Coordinator/Engineer and third party consulting engineers and other experts.

In addition the Town should be reimbursed for all other costs associated with the project including, but not limited to:

- legal costs;
- land acquisition;
- infrastructure relocation and replacement;
- drainage improvements;
- required streetscape improvements;
- historic structure related costs;
- conservation/open space related costs;
- downtown improvement costs;
- special security fencing in areas proximate to Public Schools;
- sound and visual screening in residential and commercial areas abutting the rail line;
- endangered species protection funds;
- and other costs which would be identifiable only when the proposed rail right of way plans are available.

#### IV. NO BUILD (ENHANCED BUS) ALTERNATIVE

As acknowledged by the project proponent, there is existing adequate public and private bus transportation between Boston, Fall River, and New Bedford, with multiple park and ride locations, and there are substantial means of enhancing this existing service with efficient and inexpensive upgrades which will more than fully meet the purported purpose of the project which is to enhance transportation options between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area.

L-079.20

The scant and inadequate data it has presented to support the claim that there is a compelling need for enhancement of public transportation between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area, is reflected in the project proponent's claim that "poor connectivity" to metropolitan Boston from the urban areas of New Bedford and Fall River "may constrain" economic activity in the New



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L-079.20

Bedford/Fall River area. In using the word “may,” even the project proponent is unsure of the purported benefits to be gained by the enhancement of transportation options between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area, further compelling the conclusion that the foregoing adverse effects of the project proposed by the Stoughton Alternative far outweigh any potential benefit, and that the only reasonable option is the no-build, enhanced bus alternative.

#### V. FURTHER MITIGATION

Should this project survive further scrutiny, at a minimum, the project proponent must prepare a supplemental DEIS/DEIR which adequately mitigates the adverse effects of its project proposal.

L-079.21

In addition to the mitigation analysis set forth above, there is also aging utility infrastructure crossing the railroad tracks at 15 locations along the rail line in Stoughton. If the railroad line is to be reconstructed as proposed, sound engineering practices dictate that this aging infrastructure be replaced, as follows:

L-079.22

##### 1) Central Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sewer	15” reinforced concrete pipe	11’	1965	Replace 150’ with ductile iron pipe
Water	8”	6’		Replace 150’ with 10” ductile iron pipe in sleeve
Drain	18”	6’	1965	Check pipe for condition
Gas				Contact gas company

##### 2) Simpson Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Water	6”	6’	1965	Replace 100’ with 10” ductile iron pipe in sleeve
Gas				Contact gas company

##### 3) Easement 850’ South of Simpson Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sewer	12” vitrified clay	Deep	1952	Replace with 150’ of 20” ductile iron
Drain	60” reinforced concrete pipe	15’		No replacement necessary

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## 4) School Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Water	6"	6'	1952	Replace with 100' 12" ductile iron pipe in sleeve
Drain	36" reinforced concrete pipe			Needs inspection

L-079.22

## 5) Rose Street Drainage

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Culvert	2.5' by 2'			Replace with 24" reinforced concrete pipe

## 6) Porter Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sewer	12" cast iron	15'	1936	Replace 115' with 18" ductile iron pipe
Water	12" cast iron	6'	1936	Replace 100' with 18" ductile iron pipe in sleeve

## 7) Railroad Station Drainage

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Drainage	3' by 3'			Replace with 4' ductile iron pipe

## 8) Wyman Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sewer	10" vitrified clay	Unknown	1936	Replace with 150' 12" ductile iron pipe
Water	10" cast iron	6'		Replace with 100' 16" ductile iron pipe in sleeve
Drain	15"	4'		Replace with 60' of 18" ductile iron pipe

## 9) Sewer-393' North of Brock Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sewer	12" vitrified clay		1961	Replace 160' 12" ductile iron pipe
Drain	36" reinforced concrete pipe			No replacement necessary



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## 10) Brock Street

L-079.22

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Water	6"	6'		Replace 100' 10" ductile iron pipe in sleeve

## 11) Drain – 900' South of Brock Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Drain	3' by 3.5'	16'	L-079.22	Granite block culvert, old but good condition

## 12) Plain Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sewer	21"		1960	21" sewer is in 48" steel casing filed with grout
Water	6"	6'		Replace with 150' 8" ductile iron pipe in sleeve
Water	8"	6'		Replace with 100' 10" ductile iron pipe in sleeve

## 13) Morton Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Water	6"	6'		Replace with 100' 10" ductile iron pipe in sleeve

## 14) Easement 900' South of Morton Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Water	16"	6'	1971	Replace with 100' 24" ductile iron pipe in sleeve

## 15) 240' South of Access Opening to No. 1801 Washington Street

<u>Utility</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Depth</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Culvert	2' by 2'			Replace with minimum 4' by 4' box culvert

**KOPELMAN AND PAIGE, P.C.**

Secretary Richard Sullivan  
Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
May 27, 2011  
Page 16

VI. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Town respectfully requests that the USACE find that the Stoughton Alternative as proposed in the DEIS/DEIR is contrary to the public interest, and that the EOEEA rule that the draft report is inadequate and that a supplemental draft be prepared which either 1) focuses on the no-build (enhanced bus) alternative as the preferred alternative; or 2) which more adequately addresses the adverse impacts of the Stoughton Alternative, along with a fully developed proposed mitigation plan, as outlined herein.

L-079.23

Very truly yours,



George X. Pucci

GXP/eon

Enc.

cc: Town Manager (by Electronic Mail and First Class Mail)

Ms. Kristina Egan, Director, South Coast Rail, MassDOT (By Hand Delivery)

426032/28514/0001





**PRINCIPALS**

Joseph W. McMahon, P.E.  
Joseph J. DeSantis, P.E., PTOE  
John S. DePalma  
William T. Steffens  
Casey A. Moore, P.E.  
Gary R. McNaughton, P.E., PTOE

**ASSOCIATES**

John J. Mitchell, P.E.  
Christopher J. Williams, P.E.  
John F. Yacapsin, P.E.

May 27, 2011

Mr. George X. Pucci  
Kopelman and Paige, P.C.  
101 Arch Street  
Boston, MA 02110

RE: South Coast Rail Project  
DEIS/DEIR for EOE # 14346  
Transportation Peer Review

Dear Mr. Pucci:

McMahon Associates (McMahon), on behalf of Kopelman and Paige, P.C. and the Town of Stoughton, has completed a preliminary transportation review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) on the South Coast Rail project proposed by MassDOT dated February 2011 for EOE # 14346.

Based on our initial review, the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided in a subsequent EIS/EIR filing to properly assess the impacts of the preferred alternative. Below we have provided a detailed review of the transportation study included in the DEIS/DEIR. Several traffic issues have been identified through our review that merit further response from the Proponent. These issues include, but are not limited to, traffic volumes, capacity analysis, parking, existing and new grade crossings, ridership, freight service and railroad bridges.

L-079.24

**Project Description**

As stated in the DEIS/DEIR, the MBTA completed a Draft EIR in 2000 that analyzed six alternative routes for providing commuter rail service between downtown Boston and the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. This report focused on the three alternatives including:

- 1) Extending the existing MBTA Stoughton Line
- 2) Extending the existing MBTA Middleborough Line
- 3) Providing new service, branching off from the Providence Line near Attleboro.

In 2002, a Final EIR was prepared by the MBTA and on August 30, 2002, the Secretary of Environmental Affairs issues a Final Certificate (Executive Office of Environmental Affairs-EEA) File #10509.

The DEIS/DEIR documents focus on the extension of the Stoughton Line alternative as the preferred MassDOT alternative. This alternative would use the existing Northeast Corridor from South Station to Canton Junction. From Canton Junction, the existing active Stoughton line would be used to the Stoughton Station. Commuter rail service would be extended, using an out-of-service railroad bed south to New Bedford.

According to the DEIS/DEIR, existing train frequency from Canton Junction to Stoughton Station, along the existing MBTA Commuter Rail alignment, ranges from 17 roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. There is also freight service several times a week between Canton Junction station and Central Street in Stoughton. Proposed operating plans for the Stoughton Alternative would include three peak period trains to each of the terminal stations in New Bedford and Fall River, with a fourth train operating near the peak rush hour period. This equates to approximately one train every forty minutes from Fall River/New Bedford and one every twenty minutes from Taunton northward. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from each of the terminal stations and every ninety minutes from Taunton northward. The DEIS/DEIR states that this translates to nine round trips per weekday operation from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day.

The Stoughton Alternative will include a total of eight public grade crossings within the Town of Stoughton. Five of these grade crossings (Central Street, Simpson Street, School Street, Porter Street, and Wyman Street) are currently in operation and a sixth crossing, at Brock Street, has working signals but is not used today due as Stoughton service terminates just to the north of Brock Street. Two additional at-grade crossings would be added at Plain Street and Morton Street as part of the Stoughton Alternative.

In an effort to clearly identify potential impacts within the Town of Stoughton, we have separated the areas shown on attached Figure 4.1.54 (Stoughton Alternatives, Stoughton Line Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 1 of 5) and Figure 4.1.55 (Stoughton Alternatives, Stoughton Line Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 2 of 5) into the following sections and discussed in further detail below.

L-079.25

- 1) Central Street to Simpson Street.
- 2) School Street to Wyman Street (Downtown Stoughton)
- 3) Brock Street to Easton town line (new crossings)

### **Traffic Volumes**

Typically, as part of any project, the most recent existing traffic volumes available are used in determining traffic operations and levels-of-service (LOS) on impacted roadways and intersections. The traffic volumes information included on Table 4.1-13d on page 4.1-31 as part

L-079.26



of the DEIS/DEIR contains Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) along the roadways within the Town of Stoughton for the years 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2004. These include: L-079.26

<u>Street</u>	<u>AADT</u>	<u>AADT Year</u>
Central Street	15,400	2000
Simpson Street	2,000	2000
School Street	6,500	2004
Porter Street	10,800	2000
Wyman Street	3,500	2000
Brock Street	3,050	2001
Plain Street	6,700	1998

The traffic information contained in the report is outdated and should be supplemented with current data within Stoughton including impacted, at-grade intersections as part of the Stoughton Alternative. **We request that additional peak period traffic counts and average daily traffic information be gathered to confirm the volumes presented in the DEIS/DEIR.**

#### **At-Grade Crossings/Mitigation Improvements**

Five of the eight impacted at-grade crossings within Stoughton (Central, Simpson, School, Porter and Wyman) are currently active rail crossings that would be modified to allow double track operations. Brock Street is considered active and has working signals, but is rarely used today and would become a reactivated crossing.

As proposed, Morton Street and the private driveways to the south would be closed and a bypass roadway would be constructed to the private grade-separated crossing on Totham Farm Road. Recommended mitigation improvements at several of these at-grade crossings are being proposed, but the potential impacts on these crossings should be assessed with additional information.

#### Central Street to Simpson Street

##### *Central Street*

As shown in Table 4.1-13d, Central Street showed AADT of approximately 15,400 vehicles in 2000. Recommended mitigation improvements due to the impacts of the extension of Stoughton line at this location include:

- Relocate existing driveway to the west
- Coordinate crossing operation with fire station located 400 feet west
- Extend sidewalk through the crossing
- Install crosswalk across Central Street eastbound approach to the crossing

*Simpson Street*

Given the low volume of vehicles, no mitigation is being proposed as part of the DEIS/DEIR.

*School Street to Wyman Street (Downtown Stoughton)*

*School Street*

Mitigation includes modifying the alignment of Cushing Street.

*Porter Street (Route 27)*

Porter Street is a continuation of Canton Street after the rail crossing that carries approximately 10,800 vehicles. No mitigation is being proposed at this location.

*Wyman Street*

Recommended mitigation at the Wyman Street/Morton Street/Summer Street intersection includes reconfiguration of parking lot and driveway. There is also a proposed right-turn in, right-out at the Route 138 and northernmost parking lot driveway to the south of Wyman Street, as well as a left-turn in, left turn out configuration at the Route 138 and southernmost parking lot drive.

**Further information should be provided by the Proponent clearly showing the proposed mitigation identified above within the limits of Central Street to the Downtown Area, including the School Street, Porter Street and Wyman Street at the grade crossings. As a more detailed assessment of the existing and future crossing operations is completed, additional mitigation measures, such as upgraded crossing treatments or grade separation, should be investigated by the proponent.**

L-079.27

*New Grade Crossings*

- Plain Street
- Morton Street

*Brock Street to Easton town line*

*Brock Street*

As stated earlier, the DEIS/DEIR states that Brock Street is considered active and has working signals but is rarely used today. The Proponent states that recommended improvements to mitigate impacts include investigating installation of a traffic signal with pre-emption at Route 138 and Brock Street and geometric reconfiguration of driveways to the east and west to address the delays and queues on Brock Street. **We request further information regarding the proposed warrants and schematic layout of the implementation of a traffic signal at this location.**

L-079.28



#### *Plain Street*

Similar to Brock Street above, the Proponent is proposing further study regarding the installation of a traffic signal at Route 138 and Plain Street intersection to address queues and delays along Plain Street due to the addition of the at-grade crossing. The at-grade crossing at Plain Street is labeled on Figure 4.1-54 as an Existing Grade Crossing to remain although there is no existing crossing at this location. In addition, the existing driveway for the Town Spa Restaurant is located on Plain Street adjacent to Route 138. Any proposed improvements along Plain Street would impact the operations of this business. **Therefore, we request the Proponent clarify how this qualifies as an "existing grade crossing" as opposed to a "new grade crossing" at Plain Street. In addition, the Proponent should provide further information regarding the proposed warrants and schematic layout of the traffic signal and show how operations of the adjacent Town Spa driveway would operate in the future.**

L-079.29

#### *Morton Street*

Operations at the Morton Street/Route 138 intersections would be impacted due to the close proximity of the at-grade crossing (see attached picture route138-morton existing.jpg). There is insufficient storage distance for vehicles turning onto Morton Street from Route 138. Private driveways immediately south of Morton Street would also be affected by this situation. Therefore, the Proponent is proposing the closure of Morton Street and the private driveways to the south and proposes constructing a bypass roadway to the private grade-separated crossing on Totham Farm Road.

L-079.30

**Further details regarding the proposed physical closing of Morton Street and the private driveways to the south will be accomplished and how traffic will traffic will operate using this proposed reconfiguration. In addition, the Proponent should provide details of the bypass roadway proposed to be constructed to the private grade separated crossing on Totham Farm Road.**

#### **Capacity Analysis**

Independent field observations were conducted by McMahon during the AM and PM peak periods on Thursday, May 19, 2011 and Friday, May 20, 2011. We observed queuing and delays at several of the at-grade crossings and adjacent intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR within the Town of Stoughton. The following is a summary of our observations:

L-079.31

#### *School Street to Wyman Street (Downtown Stoughton)*

##### *School Street*

The existing at-grade crossing on School Street is located approximately 200 feet from the Canton Street/School Street unsignalized intersection. During the PM peak hour, queuing was observed on School Street on the approach to Canton Street within this short block to the at-grade crossing. In addition, queuing occurred on the east side of the at-grade crossing during the approximate 1 minute 45 second duration for the train crossing School Street. **Any**



**additional trains added as part of the Stoughton Alternative would increase queuing and delays along School Street and may introduce safety concerns at the at-grade crossing that should be addressed by the Proponent.**

L-079.31

*School Street/Canton Street*

A heavy volume of vehicles along School Street stacked due to the at-grade crossing and the egress of vehicles along Canton Street from the Stoughton Station to the south were observed during the PM Peak hour at the School Street/Canton Street intersection. Based on our experience with traffic operations at MBTA commuter rail stations, there are distinct peaks in entering and exiting traffic associated with each train that stops at a station. **The addition of trains and impacted ridership, discussed later in this letter, as part of the Stoughton Alternative could potentially increase the delays at this unsignalized intersection at School Street/Canton Street during the PM peak hour and should be addressed.**

L-079.32

*Porter Street (Route 27)*

Existing queuing and delays were observed at the at-grade crossing at Porter Street (Route 27) during the PM Peak hour. The approximate duration for the start to end of the flashing at the at-grade crossing was approximately 1 minute 35 seconds. During the time that the train crosses Porter Street during the PM Peak hour, queuing began and continued on both sides of the at-grade crossing for approximately 10-15 minutes after the trains had passed through Downtown. In addition, there are existing striped crosswalks but no signal control to get pedestrians across Porter Street to the Stoughton Station. **The increase in train frequency at the at-grade crossing at Porter Street would add to the heavily traveled block on the west side of the at-grade crossing that current approach School Street as well as between the at-grade crossing and Route 138 signalized intersection and these impacts should be addressed.**

L-079.33

*Porter Street and Route 138*

The impacts of vehicles exiting the Stoughton Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Porter Street resulted in observed impacts to the Porter Street/Route 138 signalized intersection as well the intersections within the Downtown Area. **The addition of trains and impacted ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Porter Street could potentially increase the delays within the Downtown Area during the PM peak hour and should be addressed by the Proponent.**

L-079.34

*Wyman Street*

The existing intersections on both approaches to the at-grade crossing at Wyman Street/Morton Street experience minimal queuing during both the AM and PM peak hours.

L-079.35

As identified above, a majority of the queuing and delays occur in the Downtown Stoughton area adjacent to the existing station during the peak periods. The increase of the number of trains and train frequency as part of the Stoughton Alternative will reduce the number of gaps between trains and add to the heavily traveled roadways thereby increasing delays for vehicles



within the Town of Stoughton. **The existing and proposed at-grade crossings require additional traffic operational analysis, including delays and queue lengths, to incorporate current traffic volume information and the increase of service to assess their impacts at the study area intersections should be provided by the Proponent.**

L-079.35

#### **Ridership**

The DEIS/DEIR on page 4.1-10 discusses existing and proposed ridership at the existing stations. It states that "since boardings at existing commuter rail stations located near the ends of the existing Providence and Stoughton Commuter Rail Lines are not expected to increase as a consequence of the alternatives, no traffic analyses, beyond the identification of new grade crossing locations, were completed for existing stations or municipalities with existing stations". **The logic of the reduction of spaces in the Downtown Area parking and impacts to ridership needs to be fully explained by the Proponent. In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Stoughton Station as part of the Stoughton Alternative. Any information, including a possible origin/destination study of existing vehicles utilizing Stoughton Station should be provided.**

L-079.36

#### **Stations**

It states on page 3-81 of the DEIS/DEIR that several existing commuter rail stations would be impacted by constructing an additional track along segments of the existing right-of-way. Table 3.2-23 on page 3-82 as shown below provides a summary of new and modified train stations affected as part of the Stoughton Alternative:

<u>Station Name</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Stoughton Alternative</u>
Barrowsville	Norton	New	
Battleship Cove	Fall River	New	X
Canton Center	Canton	Existing	X
Canton Junction	Canton	Existing	
Taunton Depot	Taunton	New	X
Easton Village	Easton	New	X
Fall River Depot	Fall River	New	X
Freetown	Freetown	New	X
King's Highway	New Bedford	New	X
North Easton	Easton/Stoughton	New	X
Mansfield	Mansfield	Existing	
Raynham Place	Raynham	New	X
Sharon	Sharon	Existing	
Stoughton	Stoughton	Existing	X
Taunton (Dean St)	Taunton	New	X
Downtown Taunton Depot	Taunton	New	
Whale's Tooth	New Bedford	New	X

It is stated in the DEIS/DEIR on page 3-82 that “the intended goal that the existing commuter rail station designs would be updated”. In addition, proposed high-level platforms would be constructed at a height that is 4 feet above the track level, allowing for level-boarding onto all the commuter rail coaches for a 9-car train set (approximately 800’ long). **The logic of the reduction of spaces in the Downtown Area parking and impacts to ridership needs to be fully explained by the Proponent. In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Stoughton Station as part of the Stoughton Alternative. We request the Proponent address if new ridership projections will lead to the possibility of future station consolidations or modifications.**

L-079.37

L-079.38

#### **Safety/Crash Rates**

McMahon conducted an independent study regarding accident data for the study area and at-grade intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR. Information was obtained from MassDOT for the most recent three-year period available. This data includes complete yearly accident summaries for 2006, 2007, and 2008. The Accident Summary shown below in Table 1 was prepared to identify potential high accident frequencies at the study area intersections. As shown in the table, 36 accidents were reported over the three year period at the grade crossing and Canton Street, 22 accidents at the Route 138 and Brock Street unsignalized intersection, 15 accidents at the Porter Street and Rose Street unsignalized intersection, 12 accidents at the Route 138 and Plain Street, and 10 accidents reported at the Morton Street and Route 138 unsignalized intersection. **Although we have collected the accident data, it is unclear when the safety threshold at the study area and at-grade intersections is met or if they exceed the average accident rates. A thorough assessment should be provided by the Proponent to ensure that these locations include adequate safety measures.**

L-079.39



**Table 1: South Coast Rail Accident Summary**

Year	Central Street	Simpson Street	School Street	Canton Street	Porter Street	Rose Street	Wyman Street	Brock Street	Route 138 and Brook	Plain Street	Route 138 and Plain	Morton Street
2006	0	0	1	13	1	1	0	1	5	1	5	3
2007	2	0	0	8	4	5	2	0	9	0	3	5
2008	4	0	0	15	4	2	1	0	8	0	4	2
<b>Total</b>	6	0	1	36	9	15	3	1	22	1	12	10
<b>Type</b>												
Angle	0	0	1	24	1	6	2	1	16	0	8	2
Rear-end	2	0	0	2	2	3	0	0	3	0	2	5
Head-on	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sideswipe	1	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Single Vehicle	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	2	0
Unknown	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	6	0	1	36	9	15	3	1	22	1	12	10
<b>Severity</b>												
Property Damage	5	0	1	23	6	11	3	1	13	1	7	7
Personal Injury	1	0	0	13	3	2	0	0	8	0	2	3
Fatality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	0
<b>Total</b>	6	0	1	36	9	15	3	1	22	1	12	10
<b>Weather</b>												
Clear	3	0	0	19	7	11	2	1	15	0	8	8
Cloudy	2	0	1	7	1	3	0	0	2	0	2	0
Rain	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1
Snow	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	1
Ice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sleet	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fog	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	6	0	1	36	9	15	3	1	22	1	12	10
<b>Time</b>												
7:00 AM to 9:00 AM	0	0	0	3	2	1	0	1	1	0	3	0
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM	3	0	1	15	3	8	2	0	12	1	3	4
4:00 PM to 6:00 PM	2	0	0	11	3	2	0	0	5	0	3	3
6:00 PM to 7:00 AM	1	0	0	7	1	4	1	0	4	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	6	0	1	36	9	15	3	1	22	1	12	10

### Parking

Figure 3.2-40 shows the proposed reconstruction of Stoughton Station due the impacts of the Stoughton Alternative. Recommended mitigation at the Wyman Street/Morton Street/Summer Street intersection includes reconfiguration of the parking lot and driveway. There are also a proposed right turn-in, right-out at the Route 138 and northernmost parking lot access to the south of Wyman Street and a left turn in, left turn out configuration at the Route 138 and southernmost parking lot access. **We request the Proponent provide additional information related to the revised parking layouts in the Downtown Area, including parking utilization projections, and existing data and any other relevant data associated with operation of these parking lots and abutting roadways. In addition, any direct and indirect impacts to the reconstructed Stoughton Station due to the reductions of parking should be provided by the Proponent.**

L-079.40

### Peak and Off-Peak Trips

According to the DEIS/DEIR, existing train frequency from Canton Junction Station to Stoughton Station, along the existing MBTA Commuter Rail alignment, ranges from 17 roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. There is also freight service several times a week between Canton Junction station and Central Street in Stoughton. Proposed operating plans for the Stoughton Alternative would include three peak periods trains to each of the terminal station of New Bedford and Fall River with a fourth train operating near the peak rush hour period. This equates to approximately one train every forty minutes from Fall River/New Bedford and one every twenty minutes from Taunton northward. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from each of the terminal stations and every ninety minutes from Taunton northward. The DEIS/DEIR states that this translates to nine round trips per weekday operation from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day. However, if each terminal station is served by four peak/shoulder trains and six off-peak trains, along with one round trip to East Taunton, the total would be 42 trains passing through Stoughton. **We request the Proponent provide a concise comparison of the number of peak and off-peak trips per each terminal station from Fall River and New Bedford.**

L-079.41

### Freight Service

There is existing freight service several times a week between Canton Junction Station and Central Street in Stoughton. As part of the Stoughton alternative, freight service will operate via Canton Junction through Stoughton, proceeding directly via Taunton to New Bedford or Fall River. As stated in the DEIS/DEIR, the only access to the remaining active freight rail customers on the existing Stoughton Branch is via the Northeast Corridor through Canton

L-079.42



Junction. The need to access the high-speed corridor will definitely be impacted by the coming of the high-speed train service. The MBTA may or may not grant a freight carrier access to the Canton area through the proposed reconstructed line between Winter Street, Taunton, and the present location of end-of-track in Stoughton. It is stated that daytime freight service on the line segment between Winter Street and Stoughton is possible but not practical. **We suggest that any impacts of the freight service along the Stoughton line be clarified and safety impacts addressed. In addition, due to the recent accident of a freight train and MBTA Commuter Rail train in the vicinity of the Canton Junction station, any potential safety concerns between freight and passenger trains needs to be addressed.**

L-079.42

#### **Railroad Bridges**

Table 3.2-19 in the DEIS/DEIR provides a list of bridge crossings (both undergrade and overhead) that would require rehabilitation or reconstruction as part of the Stoughton Alternative for the South Coast Rail Project. **Additional specific details regarding the rehabilitation or reconstruction at the existing railroad bridges within the Town of Stoughton, including Coal Yard Road and Totman Farm Road, should be provided by the Proponent.**

L-079.43

#### **Stoughton Train Station**

Figure 3.2-40 shows the proposed reconstruction of Stoughton Station with the implementation of the Stoughton Alternative. **Any impacts to the Stoughton Train Station during construction, including hours of construction, dust and noise, temporary busing, and parking impacts should be addressed by the Proponent as well as parking and traffic operation impacts along the abutting local roadways during construction.**

L-079.44

#### **Conclusion**

Based on our initial review and the comments above, the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided by the Proponent in a subsequent EIS/EIR filing to properly assess the impacts. Several issues have been identified through our review that merit further response from the Proponent. These issues include, but are not limited to, traffic volumes, capacity analysis, parking, existing and new grade crossings, ridership, freight service and railroad bridges.

May 27, 2011

If you should have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Findlen".

Steven C. Findlen  
Senior Project Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary McNaughton".

Gary McNaughton, P.E., PTOE  
Vice President & General Manager









Figure 4.1-55
Slough Alternatives, Slough Line
Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 2 of 5

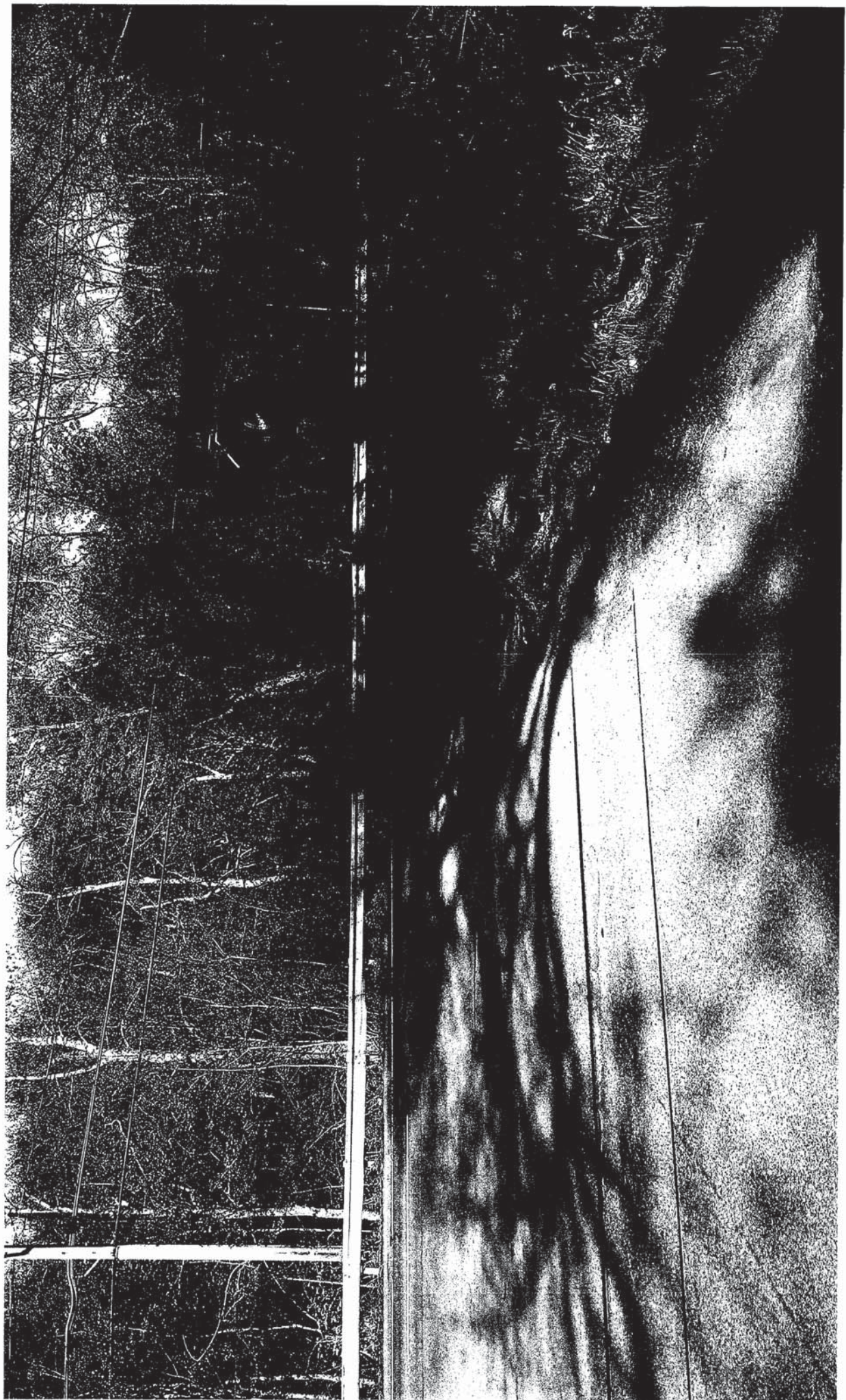
Index Map



- Legend**
- MBTA Commuter Rail Station
  - MBTA Commuter Rail
  - Town Boundaries
  - Proposed Alternative Alignment
  - Limit of Work for Proposed Station/Layover Facility
  - Limit of Permanent Impact for Proposed Rail
  - Limit of Work for Proposed Traction Power Facility\*
- Grade Crossings**
- Proposed Grade Crossing
  - Existing Grade Crossing to Remain
  - Existing Grade Crossing to be Closed
  - Existing Grade Separated Crossing to Remain
  - Proposed Grade Separated Crossing

\*Traction power facilities are only required for electric rail alternative







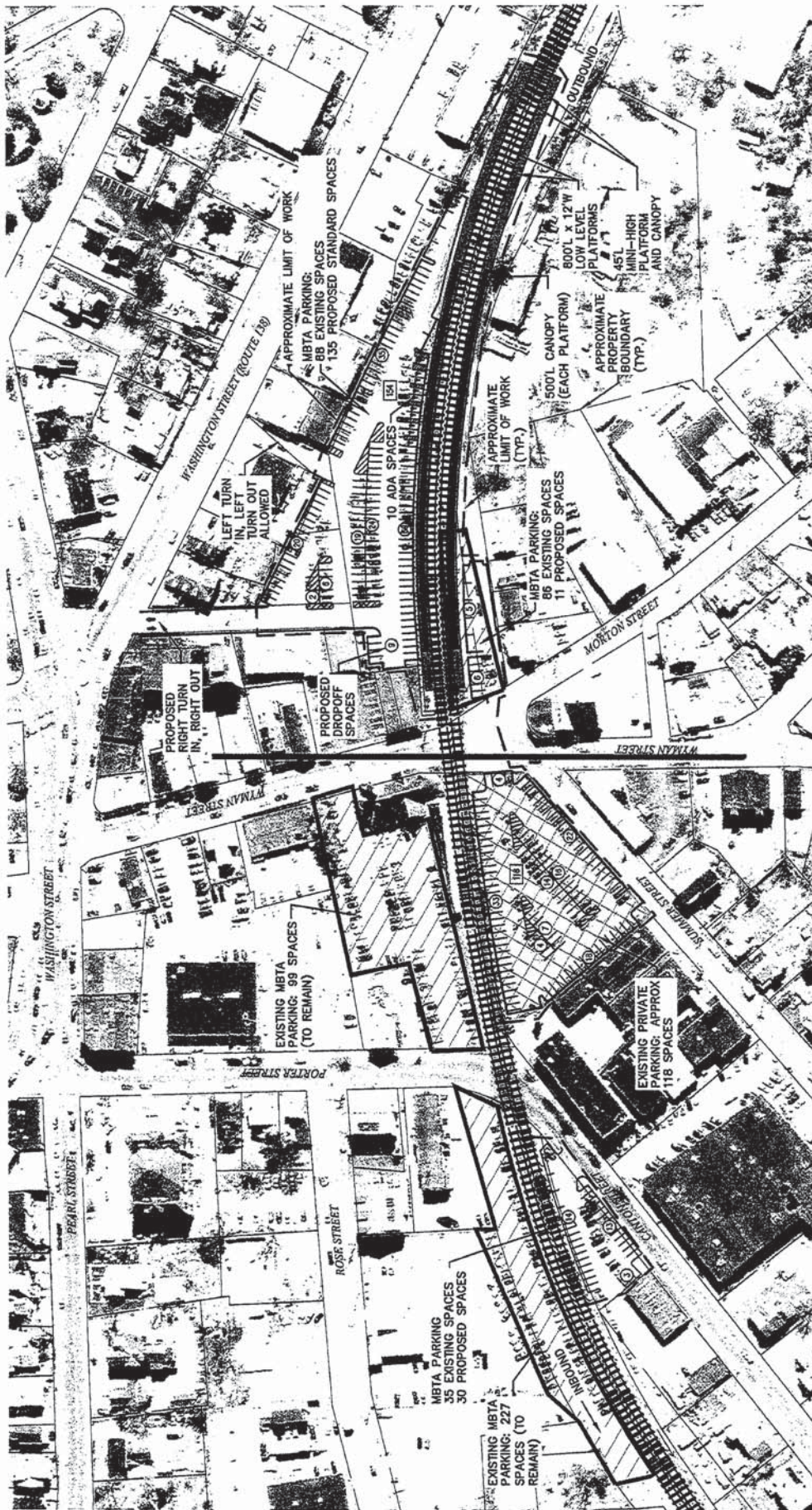


Figure 3.2-40  
Sloughton Station  
Proposed Reconstruction

MBTA Owned Parking Summary Chart

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
STANDARD SPACES	535	488
ACCESSIBLE SPACES	-	10
DROPOFF SPACES	0	9
TOTAL SPACES	535	507







# WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## Office of the Superintendent

DR. CARLOS M. COLLEY  
Superintendent &  
Business Manager

DR. MARJORIE CONDON  
Assistant Superintendent for  
Curriculum & Instruction  
508-636-1137 x1014

MS. ELIZABETH LEWIS  
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MR. JOHN DEFUSCO  
Grants Coordinator  
508-636-1013 x1008

MR. MICHAEL DUARTE  
District Maintenance  
508-636-1101 x1301

MS. MICHELLE RAPOZA  
Student Services &  
Human Resources  
508-636-1144

MS. KIM OUELLETTE  
District Custodians &  
Facilities Usage  
508-636-1101 x1300

May 2, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742 - 2751

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann:

L-010.01

I am writing in support of the extension of the rail services into New Bedford and Fall River by way of the electric rail option. As a superintendent of schools in the South Coast (Westport Community Schools is between both Fall River and New Bedford) I have firsthand experience of the impact that the economy has had on our families and communities. The possibility that the rail could extend into the south coast region promises to allow our families and communities easier access to other centers of economic development, such as Boston. The reverse is also true as the rail would make the south coast more accessible to expansion by companies into this region of the commonwealth; thereby increasing the opportunities for economic development.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carlos M. Colley

Superintendent of the Westport Community Schools

CMC/kla

MAY 3 '11 REC DIV

# Private Organizations and Businesses

<b>Page</b>	<b>Name</b>
1	Cedar Shopping Centers, Inc
2	Citizens Concerned About Tracks
11	Conservation Law Foundation
13	Easton Historical Society
16	Fairmount/Indigo Line Coalition
17	Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.
19	Fall River Office of Economic Development
22	Mass Audubon
41	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissioners
47	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
49	Massachusetts Sierra Club
53	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce
56	New Bedford Economic Development Council
59	Precix Inc.
60	Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
86	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.
92	The Nature Conservancy
94	Truventis
95	United Regional Chamber of Commerce
98	Walk Boston
100	Weaver's Cove Energy



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**From:** Ron Becker [rbecker@cedarshoppingcenters.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 24, 2011 12:45 PM

**To:** SCREIS, NAE

**Subject:** King's Highway Location

Good afternoon,

My company is the fee owner of both the Kings Plaza Shopping Center and the Fieldstone Marketplace immediately adjacent thereto. I have read through the EIS plan but failed to find the listed documents showing the superimposed view of the newly proposed rail stations as described therein. Specifically there is no attachment detailing what is referenced as 4.5-62A and/or 4.5-62B

E-046.01

Is there a way that those could be forwarded to me via email for our review.

Thank you.

Ronald J. Becker

Ronald J. Becker, SCSM  
Assistant Vice President &  
Regional Director - Property Management  
Cedar Shopping Centers, Inc.  
415 Egg Harbor Road - Suite 21A  
Sewell, NJ 08080  
(856) 218-8677 Ext. 109 - Main  
(856) 218-8678 - Fax  
[www.cedarshoppingcenters.com](http://www.cedarshoppingcenters.com)

Comment I – DEIS/DEIR, February 2011  
South Coast Rail Project (Six Pages)

Heather Graf, Coordinator  
'Citizens Concerned About Tracks' (CCATS)

Town of Norton's Rep.- S.E. Mass Commuter Rail Task Force  
May 25, 2011

We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR which demonstrates that the Attleboro Route is not only 'Infeasible', but also would result in significantly greater environmental impacts than the other rail options.

L-090.01

**Highlights of the 2011 DEIS/DEIR:**  
[Information Copied from the Executive Summary]

Project Purpose: 'To more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston Massachusetts, and to enhance regional mobility.' Used to evaluate whether there are less environmentally damaging practicable alternatives available. Army Corps Guidelines state that an alternative is 'Practicable' if it is – 'Available and capable of being done after taking into consideration: Cost, Existing Technology, and Logistics in light of the overall project purpose.'

**The Attleboro Alternatives:**

Diesel or Electric Trains along the Attleboro Route

38 NEW TRAINS ADDED to: The Northeast Corridor, The new double track Attleboro By-Pass, & The Attleboro Secondary (CSX freight track between the By-Pass Attleboro/Norton and through the City of Taunton).  
With 15 AT-GRADE CROSSINGS within 1 ¼ miles of Taunton Center.

Project Purpose Measure Section 1.4.6.1

Attleboro Alternatives FAIL the project purpose measure as they do not meet the basic service delivery requirements, mostly due to poor on-time performance.



To avoid displacement of a large number of business owners and residents, the fourth track would be constructed within the ROW of the Orange Line. The ORANGE LINE would be relocated to a new 1.4 mile TUNNEL extension.

Several Orange Line stations would need to be reconstructed.

Some rail service would be suspended and replaced by bus service.

Length of time to complete the new fourth track – 10 to 12 YEARS.

Cost of the new fourth track estimated at 2.4 BILLION Dollars.

Implementation of this infrastructure requirement is INFEASIBLE.

#### Environmental Impacts Measure Section 1.4.6.3

The Attleboro Alternatives would result in the GREATEST combined environmental impact.

#### Impacts and Operational Performance Section 1.5.1.3

Attleboro Alternatives are operationally INFEASIBLE, not meeting MBTA on-time standards, would contribute to a cascading negative impacts on the Northeast Corridor. Construction of fourth track needed to address infeasibility is IMPRACTICABLE due to construction cost, schedule and environmental impacts.

#### Municipal Tax Revenue Loss

Attleboro Alternatives would have the GREATEST Impact (\$26,126) estimated loss for the Mansfield Station.

#### NOISE Section 1.5.6

Attleboro Alternatives would result in the LARGEST number of noise impacts, with the addition of 38 NEW TRAINS added to: The NEC system, the Attleboro By-Pass, and Attleboro Secondary (CSX Freight Track).

#### Open Space Section 1.5.10

Attleboro Alternatives would result in the LARGEST number of open space acres impacted due to the Attleboro By-Pass.

#### Biodiversity Section 1.5.14

Losses of wetland habitat are LARGEST for the Attleboro Alternatives (21.5 acres) with GREATEST impacts to vernal pool wetland habitat (5.4 acres).



### Biodiversity

The Rapid Bus Alternative would impact the largest quantity of upland habitat (317 Acres).

Losses of wetland habitat are second largest (20.3 acres) after Attleboro.

Impacts to vernal pools are second greatest (2.3 acres) after Attleboro.

### **Stoughton Alternatives:**

Diesel or Electric Trains along the Original Stoughton Route/Corridor

FOUR NEW TRAINS added to the existing system

Trains already running on the Stoughton Line would have their trips extended to New Bedford and Fall River.

Chosen by MassDOT (Project Proponent) as the 'Preferred Alternative'.

In MassDOT's View:

'The Stoughton Corridor Alternatives would provide the greatest transportation benefits.'

### Project Purpose Measure

'The Stoughton Corridor Alternatives (unlike the other corridors) DO Fully MEET the project purpose measure.'

### Practicability Measure

'The Stoughton Corridor Alternatives ARE practicable because they can be built taking into consideration: cost, existing technology and logistics in light of the overall project purpose.'

'In MassDOT's view, The Stoughton Alternatives can be permitted and adequate mitigation can be provided particularly for impacts to: wetlands, wildlife habitat, rare species and water quality.'

### **Conclusion:**

'Citizens Concerned About Tracks' continues to support the restoration of commuter rail service from Boston to the cities of Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River which will benefit the South Coast Region.

We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR which demonstrate that the Attleboro Alternatives are not only INFEASIBLE, but also would result in significantly greater environmental impacts than the other rail options.

L-090.02



Comment I – DEIS/DEIR, February 2011  
South Coast Rail Project (Six Pages)

Heather Graf, Coordinator  
'Citizens Concerned About Tracks' (CCATS)

Town of Norton's Rep.- S.E. Mass Commuter Rail Task Force  
May 25, 2011

We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR which demonstrates that the Attleboro Route is not only 'Infeasible', but also would result in significantly greater environmental impacts than the other rail options.

L-048.01

**Highlights of the 2011 DEIS/DEIR:**

[Information Copied from the Executive Summary]

Project Purpose: 'To more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston Massachusetts, and to enhance regional mobility.' Used to evaluate whether there are less environmentally damaging practicable alternatives available. Army Corps Guidelines state that an alternative is 'Practicable' if it is – 'Available and capable of being done after taking into consideration: Cost, Existing Technology, and Logistics in light of the overall project purpose.'

**The Attleboro Alternatives:**

Diesel or Electric Trains along the Attleboro Route

38 NEW TRAINS ADDED to: The Northeast Corridor, The new double track Attleboro By-Pass, & The Attleboro Secondary (CSX freight track between the By-Pass Attleboro/Norton and through the City of Taunton). With 15 AT-GRADE CROSSINGS within 1 ¼ miles of Taunton Center.

Project Purpose Measure Section 1.4.6.1

Attleboro Alternatives FAIL the project purpose measure as they do not meet the basic service delivery requirements, mostly due to poor on-time performance.

#### Track Infrastructure Improvements Section 1.4.2.3

Due to lack of capacity on the Northeast Corridor -

The Attleboro Alternatives would require:

Construction of a new 18.7 MILE THIRD TRACK from the Attleboro By-Pass to Readville - Impacting all of the towns along the NE Corridor from Mansfield north to Boston (Mansfield, Foxboro, Sharon & Canton).

Construction of the NEW 2.8 MILE BY-PASS, a new two-track rail in a new right-of-way to connect the CSX freight line and the NE Corridor.

Reconstruction of 9.7 miles of existing freight track.

Constructing, reconstructing or widening 44 BRIDGES.

Major reconstruction at three existing commuter rail STATIONS (MANSFIELD, SHARON, CANTON JUNCTION).

Reconstruction of RTE.106 in Mansfield (Just completed in 2010).

Construction of a new bridge running parallel to (and blocking view of) The Historic CANTON VIADUCT.

Some work on the existing Route 128 Station.

#### Rail Alternatives Operations Section 1.4.3.2

Attleboro Alternatives would be a NEW commuter rail service, adding 38 new trains which would stop at major stations on the existing Northeast Corridor so as not to further congest a track which is at capacity.

For New Bedford trains there would be 9 stops on the Attleboro Alternatives compared to the 15 established stops with extension of the Stoughton Route.

#### Practicability Measure Section 1.4.6.2

Attleboro Alternatives perform the POOREST overall on the practicability measure.

They are operationally INFEASIBLE, do not meet the MBTA on-time standard in morning peak, and experience an even worse on-time performance during evening peak commute.

Attleboro Alternatives also would contribute to a cascading NEGATIVE IMPACT on the on-time performance of the entire southerly commuter rail system, including: Worcester, Franklin, Needham & Providence Lines.

To address the operational infeasibility, capacity on the Northeast Corridor would have to be increased through construction of a new FOURTH TRACK between Forest Hills Station and Back Bay.



To avoid displacement of a large number of business owners and residents, the fourth track would be constructed within the ROW of the Orange Line. The ORANGE LINE would be relocated to a new 1.4 mile TUNNEL extension.

Several Orange Line stations would need to be reconstructed.  
Some rail service would be suspended and replaced by bus service.

Length of time to complete the new fourth track – 10 to 12 YEARS.

Cost of the new fourth track estimated at 2.4 BILLION Dollars.

Implementation of this infrastructure requirement is INFEASIBLE.

#### Environmental Impacts Measure Section 1.4.6.3

The Attleboro Alternatives would result in the GREATEST combined environmental impact.

#### Impacts and Operational Performance Section 1.5.1.3

Attleboro Alternatives are operationally INFEASIBLE, not meeting MBTA on-time standards, would contribute to a cascading negative impacts on the Northeast Corridor. Construction of fourth track needed to address infeasibility is IMPRACTICABLE due to construction cost, schedule and environmental impacts.

#### Municipal Tax Revenue Loss

Attleboro Alternatives would have the GREATEST Impact (\$26,126) estimated loss for the Mansfield Station.

#### NOISE Section 1.5.6

Attleboro Alternatives would result in the LARGEST number of noise impacts, with the addition of 38 NEW TRAINS added to: The NEC system, the Attleboro By-Pass, and Attleboro Secondary (CSX Freight Track).

#### Open Space Section 1.5.10

Attleboro Alternatives would result in the LARGEST number of open space acres impacted due to the Attleboro By-Pass.

#### Biodiversity Section 1.5.14

Losses of wetland habitat are LARGEST for the Attleboro Alternatives (21.5 acres) with GREATEST impacts to vernal pool wetland habitat (5.4 acres).

#### Wetland Resources Section 1.5.16

Attleboro Alternatives would impact the MOST acreage of wetlands of all the rail options.

Although the Stoughton Alternatives cross the Hockomock Swamp ACEC, of the 1.8 acres in the ACEC – only 0.5 acres are actually wetlands.

The remaining 1.3 acres are where an existing stream has flowed over its banks onto the existing railbed. Restoration of the stream to its original intact channel would result in improvement of the ecology of the stream.

#### **The Rapid Bus Alternative:**

The Rapid Bus Alternative would provide commuter bus service from New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton to South Station via I-93, Rte. 24, and Rte. 140.

North of Route 495: Buses would use a combination of new zipper bus lanes, new reversible bus lanes, two-way bus lanes, existing HOV lanes, and a short section of mixed traffic.

South of the Route 495 Interchange in Raynham: Buses would travel in the general purpose lanes with mixed traffic.

The New Bedford Route would be 56.4 miles long.

The Fall River Route would be 51.5 miles long.

#### Project Purpose Measure

The Rapid Bus Alternative FAILS the project purpose measure.

Performs most poorly of all the build alternatives failing on two measures: Regional Mobility and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

#### Operations

The Rapid Bus Alternative would be affected by highway congestion levels, creating the longest travel time (103 minutes) and the lowest ridership.

#### Practicability Measure

The Rapid Bus Alternative does NOT perform well on the practicability measure, particularly cost per rider (\$100) and On-Time Performance (Most Unreliable Travel Time).

#### Environmental Impacts Measure

The Rapid Bus Alternative would result in the second greatest combined environmental impacts (after the Attleboro Rail Alternatives).



### Biodiversity

The Rapid Bus Alternative would impact the largest quantity of upland habitat (317 Acres).

Losses of wetland habitat are second largest (20.3 acres) after Attleboro. Impacts to vernal pools are second greatest (2.3 acres) after Attleboro.

### **Stoughton Alternatives:**

Diesel or Electric Trains along the Original Stoughton Route/Corridor  
FOUR NEW TRAINS added to the existing system

Trains already running on the Stoughton Line would have their trips extended to New Bedford and Fall River.

Chosen by MassDOT (Project Proponent) as the ‘Preferred Alternative’.

In MassDOT’s View:

‘The Stoughton Corridor Alternatives would provide the greatest transportation benefits.’

### Project Purpose Measure

‘The Stoughton Corridor Alternatives (unlike the other corridors) DO Fully MEET the project purpose measure.’

### Practicability Measure

‘The Stoughton Corridor Alternatives ARE practicable because they can be built taking into consideration: cost, existing technology and logistics in light of the overall project purpose.’

‘In MassDOT’s view, The Stoughton Alternatives can be permitted and adequate mitigation can be provided particularly for impacts to: wetlands, wildlife habitat, rare species and water quality.’

### **Conclusion:**

‘Citizens Concerned About Tracks’ continues to support the restoration of commuter rail service from Boston to the cities of Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River which will benefit the South Coast Region.

We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR which demonstrate that the Attleboro Alternatives are not only INFEASIBLE, but also would result in significantly greater environmental impacts than the other rail options.

L-048.02

CCATS concurs with the project proponent (MassDOT) that the Original Stoughton Alternatives (Extension of The Straight Stoughton Route or Corridor) will best meet the Project Purpose. And we remain optimistic the Army Corps will issue a permit (under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act) based on evaluation of the overriding public interest.

L-048.03

We remain adamantly opposed to the Attleboro Alternatives, and are confident that the Final EIS/EIR will eliminate the Attleboro Route from any further consideration for South Coast Rail.

L-048.04

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.  
Please See Also: Comment II

*Heather Graf*



May 23, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

RE: South Coast Rail Project DEIS/DEIR, File Number: NAE-2007-00698

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

The Conservation Law Foundation ("CLF") welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIS/DEIR") for the South Coast Rail Project ("South Coast Rail"). CLF is a nonprofit, member-supported organization working to conserve natural resources, protect public health and promote thriving communities for all in the New England region. CLF has been a long-time supporter of public transportation, including many commuter rail projects and has long advocated, with our community partners, for construction of improvements along the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Fairmount Line. Our limited comments will focus on the positive implications the selection of electric over diesel alternatives for South Coast Rail would have on the broader Massachusetts commuter rail system and on the Fairmount Line in particular.

CLF is pleased that each rail alternative currently under consideration for South Coast Rail includes an electric option. Not surprisingly, the DEIS/DEIR demonstrates that there are very substantial air quality and climate protection benefits associated with electrification of South Coast Rail. The electric alternatives, for example, would provide between four to nine times more nitrogen (NOx) reductions over their respective diesel counterparts. See DEIS/DEIR, p. 3-142, Table 3.3-16. They would also provide 1.25 to 1.4 times more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) reductions. See DEIS/DEIR, p. 3-143, Table 3.3-17.

L-037.01

The ultimate benefits of selecting an electric alternative for South Coast Rail, however, would be vastly greater than those identified in the DEIS/DEIR, since such a choice would open up the opportunity for electrification of other commuter rail lines in Massachusetts, particularly those coming into Boston's South Station, including the Fairmount Line. Electrification of the whole commuter rail system serving South Station is possible because its infrastructure has been constructed so that it can be retrofitted for electric trains. The Northeast Corridor ("NEC") is already electrified, and as a result the Providence Line could immediately use electric trains—all that would be needed is additional locomotives. See, e.g., Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Facts and Background Information for FY 2009, p. 4. If one of the electric alternatives is chosen for South Coast Rail it would decrease the costs of investing in electrification on the other lines since some of the upfront costs, such as retraining staff, securing maintenance contracts, and even purchasing vehicles would be reduced. Electrification of South Coast Rail would also make it possible to continue the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail Company's current practice of rotating locomotives between commuter rail lines. As a result, the already positive benefits of electrification of South Coast Rail would be magnified substantially.

L-037.02

NAV25'11 REG DIV

Electrification of trains comes with great advantages, particularly here in the Northeast, where the fuel mix powering our regional transmission system is made up, among others, of forty-one percent natural gas, twenty-two percent oil, and less than ten percent coal, and there is an existing policy framework (e.g., the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, state renewable portfolio standards) that provides market incentives for increased renewable power generation. Electric trains achieve faster top speeds and accelerate much more quickly than their diesel counterparts, and they do not require refueling. See, e.g., West Toronto Chapter, Professional Engineers Ontario, *Toward a Clean Train Policy: Diesel versus Electric*, The Journal of Policy Engagement (Volume 2, No. 3, June 2010), p. 20. Electric trains are also more energy efficient because they do not have to carry the weight of the diesel fuel around, which can add thousands of pounds. Id. Regenerative braking also makes electric traction technology much more efficient. When an electric train is accelerating, it uses the motors to drive the train. When it brakes, it uses the motors as a generator to slow the train. The generated power can be pushed back into the system to be used by other trains. Id. Electric engines are also easier and less expensive to maintain, because they have fewer moving parts, while the upkeep of large diesel engines is difficult and requires highly skilled mechanics. Id. at 21. The electric commuter trains are a lot quieter, producing less vibration and have zero mobile source air pollution. Id. at 19.

L-037.03

As a result of these technological advantages, electric trains do not contribute to regional and local air pollution, which would help the region reach the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground level ozone and decrease exposure to harmful particulate matter. This has special significance for environmental justice communities, such as those living along the Fairmount Line. Electrification would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the potential, over time, for zero greenhouse gas emissions, with expansion of renewable energy resources in New England. All these environmental benefits would be accompanied by faster, more comfortable, quieter and more reliable service, which attracts greater ridership. More riders in turn translates to a reduction in vehicles miles traveled ("VMT"), yielding additional decreases in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while helping to address congestion on the roads in the region. Electrification of commuter rail at the same time lowers operating costs. Commuter rail systems in Chicago, New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington already use electric trains and San Francisco and Denver have active plans for electrification.

L-037.04

For all the above reasons, CLF strongly urges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to select one of the three electric alternatives proposed in the DEIS/DEIR. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached by phone at (617) 850-1739 or by email at [rmares@clf.org](mailto:rmares@clf.org).

L-037.05

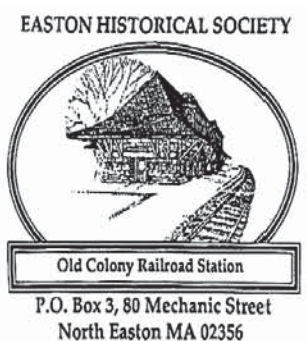
Sincerely,



Rafael Mares  
Staff Attorney

cc Kristina Egan, MassDOT





Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps. Of Engineers  
May 27, 2011

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

The Easton Historical Society, located at 80 Mechanic Street, North Easton, is an immediate abutter to the proposed South Coast Rail Project. We are hereby providing comments on the recent Draft EIR/EIS report issued by the Army Corp. of Engineers in conjunction with the Massachusetts MEPA Office.

L-077.01

The Society is absolutely against the Stoughton Alternative which has been identified by the Commonwealth as the “preferred route” for the South Coast Rail Project. We feel there are inaccuracies in the report, and do not think that the report reflects the true impact on the Society, our building, and the Town of Easton.

The Society is housed in the historic 1882 Old Colony Railroad Station. This building, which was designed by H. H. Richardson and landscaped by F. L. Olmsted, sits less than twenty feet from the railroad right of way. We are one of the cornerstones of the North Easton National Register Historic District, the Ames Local Historic District, and we are designated as a National Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. The Society is an integral part in the history and culture of Easton, and acts as the repository for items related to the Town of Easton. These collections include artifacts and papers relating to all areas of the town. Of special note is the collection on the Ames family of Easton and their associated business interests. The Society is a well known resource for historical research on these topics. Researchers, architects and students from across the world come to North Easton to view the five Richardson buildings and Olmsted landscapes. These buildings can be easily seen in the context in which they were originally built, as North Easton is a rare example of an intact industrial village. Here one can see the magnificent Shovel Works, the Ames family homes, period worker housing, public buildings and historic gardens. Our visitors include the University of Virginia, Harvard University, Yale University, M.I.T., the American Institute of Architects, and researchers from as far away as Germany and Japan. The Victorian Society, which runs a summer school on architecture in Newport, R.I., has been visiting

L-077.02

the Richardson buildings for more than thirty years. The international fame associated with our historic treasures cannot be underestimated.

The Society has concerns in several areas. Let us begin by stating that we are being placed in a position to comment without having some significant information available. To date, we have not seen any station design plans for the North Easton Village Station, so it is not possible to comment fully on what may be the most concerning and intrusive part of this project. Asking for comment on an incomplete plan is unrealistic, and we reserve the right to comment when those plans are made public. We do not see how any final comment from us can be issued when critical information like this has not been forthcoming. That being stated, here are our concerns.

L-077.03

During the construction phase we have concerns about damage to our building from heavy equipment usage in close proximity to the building. We are concerned about the potential weakening of the soil around our foundation as the rail bed is being removed and rebuilt. There is significant concern about vibration from any pile driving that might be done in the immediate vicinity such as the Main Street Bridge reconstruction. After construction we have concerns about the vibration and noise that will arise from the train traffic. This includes the noise of the engines themselves as well as whistle blasts as the train approaches any of several nearby grade crossings. Third, we are also concerned about measures to be taken to safeguard the building in the event of an accident. At this time, it appears that this issue has not been identified or discussed as part of the potential negative effects on this unique cultural resource.

L-077.04

The most significant concern we have is that this project will affect our viability to operate as a history museum. We feel that the proposed stop in the North Easton Village will have a strong negative impact on us and our patrons and visitors. Our property will suffer a decline in its value because of its close proximity to the noise, vibration and fumes from a diesel engine. If an electric train is used, we will suffer a loss of the historic skyline due to the catenaries used to support the overhead electric lines. Historic site lines will be obscured by the train in any case. Also of concern is the proposed use of our parking lot as a “drop and go” area. The Society is not in favor of allowing this use. If we were to give up a major portion of our parking we will lose the ability to have events and meetings here. This will of course negatively impact our ability to be a community resource, and will have a negative impact on our sustaining revenue stream. The Society holds regularly scheduled meetings, and this location has been used as a meeting place by other civic groups as well. Society activities, such as the tours we offer of the surrounding area as well as educational programs we offer for a variety of groups, will be impossible to run without available parking at our facility. Safety is also a major concern as the many walking tours we offer will need to cross tracks. This is especially difficult with groups of children. We will be the only cultural asset that will be so impacted as a result of this project. Once again, it is unfair to expect us to comment fully on this since we have not seen the design or proposals for this stop.

L-077.05

Furthermore, we feel that the project is wrong for Easton. There are a host of concerns, ranging from the environmental issues, concerns for the close proximity to town water

L-077.06



supplies, the large number of grade crossings, bisecting the town and cutting off or increasing emergency vehicle response times, potential unwanted development in historic neighborhoods, the loss of post-Civil War era stonework along the route, the negative impact on several other historic structures, and alterations to historic streetscapes if the electric option is chosen. We believe the ridership data used in this study is already becoming obsolete based on population and job loss. We also believe that the ridership figures and environmental impacts do not take into consideration the increased impact of hybrid and alternative fueled vehicles and the increase in the use of technology to work from home. The report also does not mention the Little Cedar Swamp, which could be affected by the close proximity of the rail bed, the historic Poole Instrument site on Foundry Street adjacent to the railroad crossing. Among the items manufactured there were mercury thermometers, and the site contains the remains of many such broken mercury vials.

L-077.06

L-077.07

L-077.08

In closing, we hope we have effectively communicated our significant concerns about the Stoughton Alternative, its negative impact on the operation of our nationally recognized museum, and the historic nature of the town itself. In a time when many of our cultural treasures have been lost to so-called “progress”, it is important to recognize that Easton is one of the still relevant sites that recalls the classic American industrial village story in its entirety. With our famous Richardson architecture and Olmsted landscapes, works by LaFarge, Tiffany, and St. Gaudens, we can honestly say that there is no other place like North Easton anywhere in the United States. Anything less than choosing another alternative for the South Coast Rail Project will bring a great loss to the culture and history of Easton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States. Once lost, this history cannot be replaced.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Michel  
President, Easton Historical Society

Frank T. Meninno  
Curator, Easton Historical Society

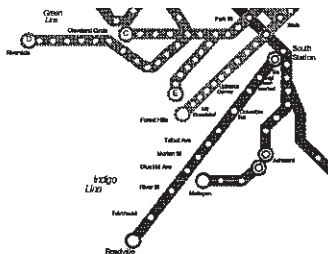
## THE FAIRMOUNT/INDIGO LINE COALITION

*A Collaborative Effort of:*

Codman Square NDC, Conservation Law Foundation, Dorchester Bay EDC, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Greater Four Corners Action Coalition, Mattapan CDC, Project RIGHT, Quincy Geneva Housing Corporation, Southwest Boston CDC

May 24, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751



RE: South Coast Rail Project DEIS/DEIR, File Number: NAE-2007-00698

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann:

The Fairmount / Indigo Line Coalition is a consortium of Boston neighborhood-based and regional organizations that has been working for much of the last decade to convert the MBTA Fairmount commuter rail line to a transportation corridor that provides access to jobs, education, retail and world class health services to residents of Hyde Park, Mattapan, Dorchester and Roxbury. We have had tremendous success in realizing our vision of equitable transit for some of Boston's most economically challenged communities. Two existing stations have been fully renovated and four new stations are to be added to the Fairmount Line. Three of the new stations are now in construction and the fourth is nearing design completion.

L-045.01

We support the South Cost Rail Project DEIS/DEIR comments submitted by the Conservation Law Foundation on May 27, 2011, advocating in favor of selecting one of the three electric alternatives proposed. Electrification of the South Coast Rail would open up the opportunity for electrification of other commuter rail lines in Massachusetts, including the Fairmount Line. The service area of the Fairmount Line includes some of the most densely populated parts of Boston where residents have the highest poverty levels and greatest dependence on transit. Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan have primarily Latino, Caribbean and African-American neighborhoods, all of which have poverty rates between twenty and twenty five percent, well above the city average of seventeen percent. Those neighborhoods also have among the highest rates of asthma-related hospitalizations for children under five years of age in Boston. These environmental justice communities, as defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, have historically been exposed to high levels of air pollution and would greatly benefit from electrification of the commuter rail line and the associated decreases in air pollution. The Fairmount Line does not currently offer full peak service or night and weekend service and therefore would also greatly benefit from the increased service that could be offered on an electrified line due to an increase in ridership.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joan Tighe by phone at 617-287-8758 or by email at jtconres@aol.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Tighe".

Joan Tighe, Coordinator  
Fairmount/Indigo Line Coalition

MAY25'11 REG DIV



**From:** Robert Mellion [RMellion@fallriverchamber.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2011 2:56 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Cc:** Steve Smith; Egan, Kristina (DOT); Jason Rua EXT; mayor@fallriverma.org  
**Subject:** Support for the Stoughton Route  
**Importance:** High  
 May 23, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
 Army Corps of Engineers  
 696 Virginia Road  
 Concord, MA 01742-2751  
 email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil  
 fax: 978-318-8303

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
 attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
 Boston MA 02114  
 email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
 fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery.

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I am writing on behalf of the Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Chamber) to urge that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers endorse MassDOT's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative of LEDPA without further delay. The Chamber also asks that the Corps consult with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office. It is the opinion of the Chamber that the Stoughton route offers the best balance of transportation, economic development and environmental impact of the options under consideration. As the document shows,

E-043.01

- The Stoughton route meets the project purpose with the least environmental damage.
- The Stoughton alternatives have less impact on wetlands than the Rapid Bus and Attleboro options.
- The Attleboro route fails operationally, so it is not practicable. It also has a high cost per rider.
- The Whittenton alternative, while superior to the Rapid Bus and the Attleboro rail alternatives, does not serve the people of New Bedford and Fall River well.
- The Stoughton route includes smart growth measures that would encourage the creation of compact development zones and protect undeveloped land. The plan could result in saving farmland and other resources, protecting the character of the South Coast.
- The Stoughton route would provide the greatest overall benefits environmental justice populations.

By selecting the Stoughton route, the South Coast Rail project will restore passenger rail transportation from South Station in Boston to the South Coast of Massachusetts. In doing so, it

E-043.02

will catalyze nearly half a billion dollars in economic development every year. The cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford are the only cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by commuter rail service. Furthermore, South Coast Rail directly improves the economy in Southeastern Massachusetts, while addressing the long-standing transportation inequity that negatively impacts the future of our region. That is why the time is now to select the Stoughton route. Thank you for your time and indulgence on this very important matter.

E-043.02

Respectfully submitted,



**Robert A. Mellion, Esq.**  
President & CEO



**Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.**  
*"The Voice of Business Since 1911"*

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May 24, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
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Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

The Fall River Office of Economic Development (FROED) has reviewed the project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report. Upon thorough review, FROED unwaveringly recommends that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers endorse MassDOT's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative or LEDPA without further delay. FROED also requests that the Corps coordinate with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office to facilitate efficient use of government resources and to expedite the environmental review process, so that the Corps and MEPA may establish a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) that identifies one route – the Stoughton alternative – for further study. This document should address reasonable outstanding issues raised by the public and/or reviewing agencies.

L-040.01

L-040.02

The Stoughton direct route offers the best balance of transportation, economic development and environmental impact of the options under consideration as demonstrated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report:

L-040.03

- The Stoughton route meets the project purpose with the least environmental damage. The Stoughton direct route is *the fastest option* with rail trip time substantially shorter than the Rapid Bus alternative - attracting more riders, taking more vehicles off the roads, improving regional mobility and reducing vehicle

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miles travelled. Trip time is a **critical** consideration in determining the best alternative.

- The Stoughton alternatives have the **least impact on wetlands** compared with the Rapid Bus and Attleboro options. Of the impacted wetland, the 1.8 acre area in the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern is primarily wetlands that have formed on the former rail bed. The project includes relocating a stream currently on the rail bed back to its natural channel, which will **create ecological benefits**. The Commonwealth has committed to constructing an elevated trestle through the swamp, which will facilitate the movement of animals across the rail alignment.
- The Corps lists measures to be developed in coordination with regulatory agencies to avoid, minimize and mitigate any rare, threatened and endangered species impacts within the project Study Area. Mitigation for biodiversity impacts can be further developed in the FEIS/FEIR.
- The **Attleboro route fails operationally** making it not practicable, and also has a high cost per rider. To address this failure, both a third and a fourth track would need to be added to parts of the heavily-travelled Northeast Corridor. Adding these tracks would **more than double the cost** of the Stoughton straight alternative.
- The Whittenton alternative, while an improvement in some ways to the Rapid Bus and the Attleboro rail alternatives, **does not adequately or equitably serve the people of New Bedford and Fall River**. These residents would experience a longer trip (by over 10 minutes each way). This longer commute time might be justified if the Whittenton alternative provided a substantial reduction to environmental impacts, however the projected difference is minimal. Moreover, **Stoughton provides greater air quality and environmental benefits**.
- The project includes smart growth measures that would encourage the creation of compact development zones and would protect undeveloped land. Implementation of the plan may **provide for farmland and other resource preservation and protect the character of the South Coast**.
- Environmental Justice populations should be afforded enhanced access to jobs, education and other opportunities that are anticipated to result from this project. The rail options, and more specifically the Stoughton direct route, provides the **greatest potential benefits to the environmental justice populations** of the South Coast.
- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report outlines mitigation for environmental resources, visual, noise, and vibration impacts. The FEIS/FEIR should further develop and present details for the Stoughton alternative. FROED encourages agency coordination to develop a resource mitigation approach that addresses the Commonwealth's and United States' needs while evaluating specific regional enhancement important ecological functions.

In summary, **FROED endorses the Stoughton direct route at the LEDPA** as it most clearly meets the project purpose with the least environmental damage. The Stoughton direct route is the fastest option, provides greater air quality and environmental benefits

L-040.04

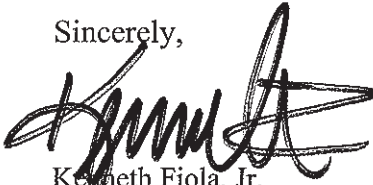


while creating ecological benefits, and provides the greatest potential benefits to the environmental justice populations. FROED anxiously awaits this *long overdue connection between regional resources and improved access to economic opportunities*. *SouthCoast Rail's unimpeded progress is a crucial component to the economic redevelopment of the SouthCoast.*

L-040.04

L-040.05

Sincerely,



Kenneth Fiola, Jr.  
Executive Vice President  
Fall River Office of Economic Development

Cc: Kristina Egan  
Director, South Coast Rail  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Ten Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116-3973

---

**From:** Priscilla Chapman [pchapman@massaudubon.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 05, 2011 4:00 PM  
**To:** Anacheka-nasemann, Alan R NAE; SCREIS, NAE  
**Cc:** timmermann.timothy@epa.gov; Heidi Ricci  
**Subject:** SCR DEIS -- request for extension

Dear Alan,

On behalf of Mass Audubon, I respectfully request a 60 day extension of the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the South Coast Rail Project. As you know, this is a major public infrastructure project with a large financial cost and potentially serious impacts to fragile ecosystems. The DEIS is a complex and lengthy document and we wish to conduct a thorough review and provide constructive comment to the Army Corps. The May 27 deadline does not allow enough time to evaluate and comment on such an extensive amount of information.

E-010.01

As you know, Mass Audubon has participated in the regulatory review of the proposed extension of commuter rail from Boston to Fall River and New Bedford for well over a decade, and I have represented Mass Audubon on the Commuter Rail Task Force since 2007. Thank you for considering this request for an extension.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Chapman

Priscilla Chapman  
 Taunton Watershed Advocate  
 Mass Audubon  
 The River Center at Boyden Refuge  
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 Taunton MA 02780  
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 pchapman@massaudubon.org





Comments to the  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the  
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office  
Regarding the South Coast Rail Project,  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report  
Public Hearing, May 4, 2011  
Priscilla Chapman, Taunton Watershed Advocate

On behalf of Mass Audubon I submit the following preliminary comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/R) for the South Coast Rail Project, based on our review to date. Additional detailed comments will be submitted prior to the end of the public comment period. Mass Audubon is an abutter to the project through its ownership of the 954-acre Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeville which would be crossed by the proposed project. We have followed this project since 1997 and submitted previous comments to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office and the Army Corps of Engineers, and we have participated in the Commuter Rail Task Force since 2007.

R-001.01

Mass Audubon generally supports commuter rail improvements as an alternative to highway expansion and as a means to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. We support the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan that identifies Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas as a means to achieve concentrated development on appropriate land in close proximity to transit and other infrastructure, preserve habitat and reduce vehicle-miles traveled. At the same time, this project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological significance and habitat for a number of state-listed species. This review needs to include sufficient information to ensure that impacts to those resources are avoided and minimized as much as possible and that unavoidable impacts are adequately mitigated as required by federal and state environmental laws.

Recognizing that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation has identified the Stoughton Route as its "preferred alternative," we focus our comments on the resource areas and projected impacts associated with that route, including resources and impacts associated with the Southern Triangle of existing freight lines from Taunton to New Bedford and Fall River that are proposed to be upgraded, and the extent to which the DEIS/R demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWWA), the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and the state and federal Clean Water Acts (CWA).

**Summary.** The DEIS/R does not provide adequate baseline information regarding potentially impacted natural resources, detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts and a detailed blueprint for implementation of the Corridor Plan to demonstrate that projected benefits of the Plan will materialize. The Scope for the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review required that the Draft EIR include a detailed wetlands and rare species mitigation plan, but the DEIS/R states that the mitigation plan will be prepared at a later date. For these reasons, we request that you require preparation of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report (SDEIS/R). The following comments summarize our concerns. We will submit additional detailed comments by the end of the comment period.

R-001.02



**Baseline information.** The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate baseline information regarding important resources and impacts to those resources by the project, especially in the Southern Triangle portion of the rail corridor. In addition to Mass Audubon's land, the Southern Triangle lines also run through other sensitive areas including public conservation lands owned by the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp (an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a National Natural Landmark). The Scope for the DEIS/R requires information on the number and location of stream crossings associated with each alternative (p. 27). During a site visit to the portion of the rail line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp on November 16, 2011 conducted by three Mass Audubon staff members, Project Director Kristina Egan and other project staff, several culverts and streams that flowed along the right-of-way (ROW) were observed that are not identified in the DEIS/R. Although the Southern Triangle involves refurbishment and improvement of existing freight lines rather than entirely new construction as in the other portions of the project, it is nonetheless important to document resources and impacts along this portion of the route. In particular, it is important that the boundary between existing rail berms and wetlands be defined in relation to actual plans for the rail upgrading work so that impacts can be properly estimated, and that the condition of culverts and bridges where water flows under the berm be documented to identify where these structures would need to be replaced. In this section of our comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), we requested that the proponent complete a survey of all streams and culverts along the ROW. We reiterate that request. The DEIS/R should also provide construction details of all stream crossings where work is proposed to allow full evaluation of potential impacts.

R-001.03

R-001.04

R-001.05

**Rare species and vernal pool surveys.** The MEPA Scope required that "the DEIR should include an endangered species impact analysis based on adequate species survey and habitat assessment for each alternative based on consultations with NHESP..." It also called for consultations with NHESP, Mass Audubon, and other impacted conservation landowners in determining which areas should be field surveyed for wetlands and rare species (p. 24). To the best of our knowledge, no rare species surveys were conducted in sensitive areas along the existing New Bedford and Fall River ROWs, including the Assonet and Acushnet Cedar Swamps; nor can we find any record of consultation with NHESP or conservation landowners in the DEIR. The MEPA Scope also required that the DEIR "identify potential vernal pools, initially using maps and aerial photography and then verify in the field..." It stated that "Potential vernal pool identification and certification should be conducted for areas within the right-of-way of the rail alignment and within a reasonable distance of the ROW... The DEIR should include the result of vernal pool investigations, including a description and mapping of those meeting the criteria for certification" (p. 26). It appears that no new vernal pool investigation was conducted for the Southern Triangle. Table 4.14-5, "Vernal Pools Within 100 Feet of South Coast Rail Alternatives" lists no vernal pools on the New Bedford line in the Assonet or Acushnet Cedar Swamps. At least one and possibly two potential vernal pools were observed on the portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp during the above-referenced site visit.

R-001.06

R-001.07

Our written comments will provide a complete list of additional baseline information that should be included in an SDEIS/R, as required by the MEPA scope.

**Impacts associated with the Stoughton alternative.** The DEIS/R indicates that impacts associated with construction of the Stoughton alternative will include:

- 11.9 acres of permanent wetlands alteration;
- filling of 1.7 acres of vernal pool and loss of 55 acres of supporting vernal pool buffer habitat;
- 3,480 feet of permanent alteration of bank;
- diversion of an intermittent stream that runs along the existing berm;
- loss of 32.5 acres of rare species habitat, including loss of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp that provides habitat for Hessel's Hairstreak butterfly, a state-listed species;
- barrier impacts to blue-spotted salamander and Blanding's turtle, both state-listed species.



The SDEIS/R utilizes the University of Massachusetts “Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System” (CAPS) model to measure the loss of ecological integrity and biodiversity that would result from each alternative. Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to support plants and animals and the natural processes necessary to sustain them over the long term. The CAPS model creates a grid over the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and calculates the “index of ecological integrity” for each cell of the grid based on eight different ecological factors. The analysis indicates that the Stoughton alternative would result in a major loss of ecological integrity. This loss would be 456.9 units, compared to 324.8 units for the Attleboro alternative and zero for Rapid Bus. The CAPS analysis attributes a large portion of this loss to “indirect impacts.” Habitat within the Hockomock Swamp has regenerated along the alignment of a rail line abandoned many decades ago – with the rails and ties removed and vegetation regrowing to close the canopy in many locations. As the DEIS/R so clearly demonstrates, the proposed project is much more than reactivation of a former rail corridor. Reconstruction of the rail bed in the Hockomock Swamp would cut through “the largest unfragmented and pristine area of wetland habitat in eastern Massachusetts” (p. 4.14-6). Impacts are likely to include introduction of invasive plants, opportunistic predators and changes in temperature of vernal pools and wetlands adjacent to the track from the creation of an opening in the canopy through the Hockomock Swamp. Regarding impacts to the Pine Swamp, the DEIS/R states, “Reconstructing the rail could create a barrier to the movement of vernal pool organisms between pools or between breeding and non-breeding habitat;” also that “Reconstructing the track would require vegetation removal which could alter the microclimate of vernal pools close to the track” (p. 4.14-87).

**Induced growth.** The DEIS/R also identifies projected impacts of induced growth and development from the project, compared to the “no build” scenario. Examples of the projected impacts are: increased vehicle miles traveled (VMTs); increases in greenhouse gas emissions related to new dispersed development and loss of forest and farmland. The Stoughton Alternative would add 75,422 VMTs per day and 20,750 tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions, and would increase loss of forestland by 575 acres and loss of farmland by 313 acres over the “no-build” alternative. The DEIS/R acknowledges the likelihood that loss of forest land would also result in loss of carbon sequestration, but does not quantify additional greenhouse gas emissions increases that would result as it should.

R-001.08

The DEIS/R states that these impacts would be reduced by implementation of the Corridor Plan and evaluates the degree of mitigation provided by “high” and “low” implementation scenarios. Mass Audubon supports vigorous implementation of the Corridor Plan. We are concerned that the DEIS/R fails to provide a detailed blueprint for that implementation to document that impacts of induced growth will in fact be offset, and other projected benefits will be provided. We request that a detailed implementation plan be developed and included in an SDEIS/R which includes a demonstrated financial commitment to the needed state, regional and local planning and land use regulatory reforms that will be needed to fully implement the Corridor Plan.

**Mitigation plans.** Despite the significance of the projected impacts, the DEIS/R fails to provide mitigation plans to replace lost resources and their functions and values. Without the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory standards of the MWPA, MESA and the state and federal CWA. The MEPA Certificate on the ENF for this project specifically required detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for impacts to rare species (p. 24), wetlands (p. 27) and biodiversity and wildlife (p. 29).

R-001.09

In some cases, projected impacts may be difficult to mitigate. For example, attempts to replicate or restore Atlantic White Cedar Swamp have yielded mixed results in the past. Vernal pool species that encounter barriers to migration may not relocate to other pools. Rare species such as Blanding’s turtle may decline if habitat is fragmented. Invasive plants, once introduced, may be difficult to remove without continuous monitoring. The NEPA/MEPA review should acknowledge the difficulties of these challenges, and provide detailed mitigation plans with an evaluation of the likelihood of success in an SDEIS/R.

R-001.10

**Project cost and mitigation.** The MEPA Certificate required that the DEIS/R provide a detailed analysis of costs, including construction, operation **and mitigation costs**, for each of the alternatives (emphasis added), as well as an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project (p. 16). As noted above, the document lacks mitigation plans. The cost of mitigation cannot be estimated without the mitigation plans. The Certificate also required the DEIS/R to address how the project and the Corridor Plan will be financed; this analysis is not provided. An SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs and an explanation of how the project and Corridor Plan will be financed.

R-001.11

Thank you for considering these comments.

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May 27, 2011

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**Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report for South Coast Rail NAE-2007-00698  
and EOEEA #14346**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

On behalf of Mass Audubon I submit the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/R) for the South Coast Rail Project. Mass Audubon is an abutter to the project through its ownership of the 954-acre Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeville which would be crossed by the proposed project. We have followed this project since 1997 and submitted previous comments to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). We have participated in the Commuter Rail Task Force since 2007 and in meetings of the project's "Box Turtle Conservation" and "Wetlands Mitigation" working groups in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

### **Request for a Supplemental DEIS/R**

The DEIS/R does not provide adequate baseline information regarding potentially impacted natural resources, detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts, and a detailed blueprint for implementation of the Corridor Plan to demonstrate that projected benefits of the Plan will materialize.

The Scope for the MEPA review required that the DEIR include this information, as the following comments will demonstrate. For this reason we request the USACE and Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) require a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Report (SDEIS/R).

Sec. 1502.9(c)(2) of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (draft, final, and supplemental statements) states that agencies may "prepare supplements when the agency determines that the purposes of the Act will be furthered by doing so."

L-064.01

Page 1-3 of the Executive Summary of the DEIS/R states that the USACE determined that an EIS is required for this project “because of the project’s potential to significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment,” and that “The purpose of the EIS is to assess the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of transit enhancements between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston proposed by MassDOT.” As the following comments will demonstrate, the DEIS/R **does not** provide adequate baseline information regarding potentially impacted natural resources to fully determine the environmental impacts of the proposed project. For this reason, we request EEA and USACE to require preparation a Supplemental DEIS/R. In the event the Secretary of EEA determines that a Supplemental DEIR is not required, we nevertheless request that the USACE prepare a Supplemental DEIS.

### **Summary Comments**

Mass Audubon generally supports commuter rail improvements as an alternative to highway expansion and as a means to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. We support the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan that identifies Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas as a means to achieve concentrated development on appropriate land in close proximity to transit and other infrastructure, preserve habitat and reduce vehicle-miles traveled. At the same time, this project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological significance, habitat for several state-listed species, and protected conservation lands. This review needs to include sufficient information to ensure that impacts to those resources are avoided and minimized as much as possible and that unavoidable impacts are adequately mitigated as required by federal and state environmental law.

Impacts of the Stoughton corridors “preferred alternative” for the project as described in the DEIS/R are based on preliminary information and may need to be adjusted following further analysis as described below. The following comments reference the impacts of the “Stoughton electric” alternative unless otherwise specified. The “Stoughton diesel” alternative impacts the same resources, either to the same degree or to a slightly lesser degree. Based on the DEIS/R, impacts include: permanent alteration of nearly 12 acres of wetlands; 66 stream crossings; loss of over 32 acres of habitat for 9 state-listed rare species; alterations within 100 feet of 40 vernal pools; significant habitat fragmentation effects including impacts on the ecological integrity of the largest freshwater wetland in the Commonwealth; loss of 182 acres of upland habitat; and work in or immediately adjacent to several public and privately protected conservation areas including properties owned by state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations. Affected areas include an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, several BioMap Core Habitats, Priority Natural Communities, and an Important Bird Area. Wetlands impacted include Atlantic White Cedar Swamps, a rare community type that is sensitive to changes in hydrology and difficult to replicate.

Given the magnitude of impacts of the proposed project, it is vital that the NEPA/MEPA review process thoroughly and adequately describe all impacts, evaluate alternatives and design details to avoid and minimize impacts, and provide a detailed mitigation plan to compensate for unavoidable impacts. The mitigation plan should be specific, identifying particular locations where environmental restoration or replication will be conducted, the preliminary plans for that work, and follow-up monitoring to ensure success. The costs of mitigation are essential elements of the project design and should be provided as part of the project analysis, not merely estimated as part of overall “contingency.” The MEPA Scope

L-064.02



required these analyses, but the DEIS/R falls short in several important respects, hence our request for a Supplemental DEIS/R. L-064.02

### **Significant Impacts of the “Preferred Alternative”**

Recognizing that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has identified the Stoughton Route as its “preferred alternative,” we focus our comments on the resource areas and projected impacts associated with that route, including resources and impacts associated with the Southern Triangle of existing freight lines from Taunton to New Bedford and Fall River that are proposed to be upgraded. These significant impacts include:

**Alteration of wetlands resource areas:** The Stoughton alternative would result in permanent alteration of at least 11.86 acres of bordering vegetated wetlands and 3,560 linear feet of bank with additional amounts of temporary alteration. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) describes the Hockomock Swamp as the largest freshwater wetland in Massachusetts.

**Streams and stream crossings:** The DEIS/R identifies 66 stream crossings along the Stoughton route. It identifies 12 perennial streams and rivers and states that all of the perennial streams are considered important fisheries habitat. The DEIS/R does not provide information regarding the current condition of existing stream crossings along the Southern Triangle lines although it mentions that some of these cross culverts may need to be replaced. The DEIS/R states in some places that culverts will be upgraded to the extent feasible to meet the stream crossing standards, while in others (e.g. existing freight lines on Southern Triangle) culverts will be replaced in-kind. It is desirable to upgrade culverts to improve passage for fish and wildlife. However, alterations of existing culvert dimensions or replacement of blocked culverts may also alter water flow and hydrology, potentially impacting adjoining wetlands or uplands. This is of particular concern where Atlantic White Cedar Swamps are involved due to sensitivity of this natural community to alterations in hydrology. It is important that all alterations to stream crossings or flows be analyzed and designs submitted that fully document direct and indirect (hydrologic) impacts and proposed mitigation. This information is also needed in order to properly evaluate all potential impacts to conservation lands where the project abuts such properties, since stream crossing work may need a wider corridor than the typical width of the berm or the right-of-way. L-064.03

The Stoughton route would result in the diversion of a perennial stream that currently runs along the abandoned railroad berm for a distance of ½ mile in the area north of the Raynham Dog Track. Although the DEIS/R claims that relocation of this stream will improve its condition, few details are provided on existing or proposed conditions of the stream. Furthermore, since the location is within the Hockomock Swamp, relocation of the stream may require additional wetlands alteration and/or impacts to abutting Article 97 lands owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG). L-064.04

**Rare species impacts:** The Stoughton alternatives would adversely impact habitat of nine state-listed species, including Blue-spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*), Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*), Blanding’s Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene Carolina*), Hessel’s Hairstreak butterfly (*Callophrys hesseli*), Mocha Emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora linearis*), Pale Green Pinion Moth (*Lithophane viridipallens*), Coastal Swamp Amphipod (*Synurella chamberlaini*), and Ringed Boghaunter dragonfly (*Williamsonia lintneri*). The DEIS/R states on page 4-15-57 that the route would “result in a loss of approximately 32.6 acres within natural areas of five Priority and Estimated L-064.05

Habitat polygons,” while Table 4.15-30 on page 4-15-62 identifies the potential habitat loss as 9.9 acres (see comment below under **Impacts to Rare Species**). The loss includes areas of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, identified by NHESP as a “Priority Natural Community.” Clarification is needed regarding the full extent of impacts to rare species habitats.

L-064.05

**Vernal pool impacts:** The DEIS/R states that forty certified or potential vernal pools were identified within 100 feet of the right-of-way of the Stoughton alternative. This route would result in loss of 1.77 acres of vernal pool and 55.04 acres of supporting upland adjacent to vernal pools. Additional vernal pools may exist along the Southern Triangle freight lines but are not identified in the DEIS/R.

L-064.06

**Biodiversity impacts:** The Stoughton alternative would result in loss of at least 182 acres of upland habitat in addition to 11.86 acres of wetlands and fragmentation of habitat in the Hockomock and Pine Swamps. All of the project alternatives were evaluated under the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis developed by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to determine loss of ecological integrity. The analysis predicted a high degree of loss of ecological integrity (EI) for the Stoughton Route compared to none for the Rapid Bus. As an example of EI loss, the Stoughton route would disrupt 19,200 feet of migratory route habitat through the “barrier effect,” impacting movement of the Blue-spotted Salamander, Eastern Box Turtle and Blanding’s Turtle.

**Protected open space:** The Stoughton route crosses several public- or privately-owned conservation areas that are permanently protected, including the 5,000-acre Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area (DFG), the 275-acre Pine Swamp (Town of Raynham), Mass Audubon’s Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary and the 1,000 Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation (DCR), also designated as a National Natural Landmark. All of these areas have been mapped by NHESP as “Biomap Core Habitat,” areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of habitats for rare, vulnerable, or uncommon species, Priority Natural Communities, high-quality wetland, vernal pool and other aquatic habitats and intact forest systems. All of them include outstanding examples of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp. The Hockomock Swamp is designated an “Important Bird Area” (IBA) by Mass Audubon, an area that provides important habitat to breeding, wintering or migrating birds.

It is important that all direct and indirect impacts of the project on protected conservation lands be fully documented in the NEPA/MEPA review. This includes any potential impacts from replacement or repair of stream crossings, any hydrologic alterations on abutting wetlands, and relocation of the stream presently occupying ½ mile of the rail corridor in the Hockomock.

L-064.07

### **Applicable Laws and Regulations**

We also focus our comments on the extent to which the DEIS/R demonstrates compliance with key environmental laws, particularly the requirements of the *Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act* (MWPA), the *Massachusetts Endangered Species Act* (MESA) and the state and federal *Clean Water Acts* (CWA).

L-064.08

The Guidelines to Implement Section 404(b)(1) of the *US Clean Water Act* (CFR 40 Section 230) prohibit the discharge of dredge or fill material if there is a practicable alternative that would have less adverse environmental impact on the aquatic ecosystem, and if the discharge would cause or contribute to significant degradation of the waters of the United States.



Under the MWPA, variances (310 CMR 10.05(10)) from the performance standards may only be granted if the project fulfills an overriding public interest, there are no reasonable conditions or alternatives that would allow the project to proceed in compliance, and mitigating measures are proposed that will allow the project to be conditioned so as to contribute to the protection of the interests of the Act.

Because the Stoughton alternative would result in alteration of more than 5,000 square feet of Bordering Vegetated Wetland, construction of this alternative would require a variance from the MWPA. Because it would result in discharge of fill into a vernal pool it would also require a variance under the 401 Water Quality Certification requirements (314 CMR 9.00).

The MESA regulations (321 CMR 10.23) also require an alternatives analysis and demonstration that impacts to rare species have been avoided and minimized. In addition, the proponent must demonstrate that mitigation is provided that will result in a long-term Net Benefit to the affected state-listed species.

It is vital that the NEPA/MEPA review for the project include sufficient information to fully document impacts to areas regulated under these laws, demonstrating that impacts have been avoided and minimized as much as possible, and that effective plans for mitigation will be implemented. This is an essential part of the environmental review process and should not be left outstanding until permitting. In particular, it should be noted that the MESA permit process does not include any opportunity for public review and input, therefore review of rare species impacts and mitigation through NEPA/MEPA is especially important.

### **Climate Change**

The potential impacts of climate change elevate the importance of protecting and preserving the current landscape of wetlands to the extent feasible. For example, more intense storms predicted under current global change models will require expanded flood storage areas and increase the need for buffer areas to protect private property. Undeveloped corridors including free-flowing waterways that provide opportunity for shifting and migration of natural communities and wildlife populations may be essential in response to temperature change and shifts of wetlands and other habitats. These concerns underscore the need to avoid wetlands loss to the greatest extent practicable.

The integrity of the Hockomock Swamp as a single intact block of wildlife habitat is a key element of its functionality. Large intact habitats are increasingly important as they are more resilient to environmental stresses like those associated with climate change. The ability of plants and animals to move unimpeded throughout such areas, and to be free of noise, pollution and other disturbances are important aspects of the functionality of the area. Impacts of placement of a rail line through such an area are not limited to the project footprint (as demonstrated by the CAPS analysis). The full extent of these impacts and alternatives to avoid or minimize fragmentation effects should be evaluated carefully.

### **Baseline Information**

**Project impacts in relation to protected lands and resources:** The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate baseline information regarding important resources and impacts to those resources by the project,

especially in the Southern Triangle portion of the rail corridor. In addition to Mass Audubon's land, the Southern Triangle lines also run through other sensitive areas including public conservation lands owned by DCR in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp (an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a National Natural Landmark). Details of all work where existing rail berms cross or abut protected conservation lands should be presented and the impacts evaluated and mitigated. | L-064.10

The Scope for the DEIS/R requires information on the number and location of stream crossings associated with each alternative (p. 27). During a site visit to the portion of the rail line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp on November 16, 2011 conducted by three Mass Audubon staff members, the South Coast Rail Project Director and other project staff, several culverts and streams that flowed along the right-of-way (ROW) were observed that are not identified in the DEIS/R. Although the Southern Triangle involves refurbishment and improvement of existing freight lines rather than entirely new construction as in the other portions of the project, it is nonetheless important to document resources and impacts along this portion of the route. In particular, it is important that the boundary between existing rail berms and wetlands be defined in relation to actual plans for the rail upgrading work so that impacts can be properly estimated, and that the condition of culverts and bridges where water flows under the berm be documented to identify where these structures would need to be replaced. In this section of our comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), we requested that the proponent complete a survey of all streams and culverts along the ROW. We reiterate that request. | L-064.11

The DEIS/R should also provide construction details of all stream crossings where work is proposed to allow full evaluation of potential impacts. This includes assessment of existing hydrology and condition of culverts, evaluation of whether crossings can be upgraded to better conform to stream crossing standards without adversely impacting hydrology of the swamp, and the full footprint of all proposed work. | L-064.12

**Rare species and vernal pool surveys:** The MEPA Scope required that "the DEIR should include an endangered species impact analysis based on adequate species survey and habitat assessment for each alternative based on consultations with NHESP..." It also called for consultations with NHESP, Mass Audubon, and other impacted conservation landowners in determining which areas should be field surveyed for wetlands and rare species (p. 24). Our comments on the ENF for this project stated: "Mass Audubon reiterates requests it has made previously on this project that additional on-site rare species investigations be conducted in the Assonet Cedar Swamp, with opportunity for Mass Audubon and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to provide specific recommendations on the study protocols." To the best of our knowledge, no rare species surveys were conducted in sensitive areas along the existing New Bedford and Fall River ROWs, including the Assonet and Acushnet Cedar Swamps; nor can we find any record of consultation with NHESP or conservation landowners in the DEIR. | L-064.13

The MEPA Scope also required that the DEIR "identify potential vernal pools, initially using maps and aerial photography and then verify in the field..." It stated that "Potential vernal pool identification and certification should be conducted for areas within the right-of-way of the rail alignment and within a reasonable distance of the ROW... The DEIR should include the result of vernal pool investigations, including a description and mapping of those meeting the criteria for certification" (p. 26). It appears that no new vernal pool investigation was conducted for the Southern Triangle. Table 4.14-5, "Vernal Pools Within 100 Feet of South Coast Rail Alternatives" lists no vernal pools on the New Bedford line | L-064.14



in the Assonet or Acushnet Cedar Swamps. At least one and possibly two potential vernal pools were observed on the portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp during the above-referenced site visit. L-064.14

### **Assessment of Impacts to Natural Resources**

**Impacts to wetlands:** As noted above, the DEIS/R states that the Stoughton route will result in loss of 11.86 acres of wetlands, including areas of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp along the Fall River Secondary line in Lakeville and in the Hockomock Swamp. Our comments on the ENF requested that the DEIS/R include project plans of a 1"=40' scale for areas abutting wetlands that include delineation of all resource area boundaries, streams and the location and footprint of all work, as well as cross section diagrams of pre- and post-construction dimensions of the right-of-way (showing any modifications to side slopes) and of culverts. The plans should also include wetland boundaries that have been field-delineated and approved by the local conservation commission. This information was not provided in the DEIS/R. While the exact scale of plans to be provided may be determined by EEA and the USACOE differently than our recommendation, the DEIS/R does not provide key information necessary to verify whether the actual wetlands alterations have been accurately projected. Significant areas of impact may be overlooked in the absence of field delineations of wetlands, documentation of existing locations and conditions of cross culverts, and other essential details. L-064.15

Wetland areas abutting actual work may be altered by changes in light, temperature, pH and other factors that result from clearing of existing canopy. The SDEIS/R should provide an estimate of the amount of wetlands likely to be altered by indirect impacts. L-064.16

Our comments on the ENF requested that the DEIS/R provide soil analysis for the Hockomock portion of the right-of-way to demonstrate the ability to support the footings of the trestle. If the project were to encounter difficulties with installation of the proposed trestle during construction, redesign or modification of plans could well result in additional alteration of wetland resources. L-064.17

The DEIS/R does not provide separate estimates of wetlands loss for the diesel and electric options. We request verification that the acreage of wetlands loss identified includes areas that may be cleared or filled to construct electric substations and catenary supports for line electrification. L-064.18

The DEIS/R indicates that the proposed Stoughton line will consist of single track through sensitive areas including the Hockomock, Pine, Assonet Cedar and Acushnet Cedar Swamps. We commend this decision as a means to reduce impacts to wetlands, vernal pools and rare species habitat. However, it is important to know whether potential operational, maintenance, and safety issues associated with the use of single track in these areas have been factored in. Information is needed as to whether or not single tracking in these areas has been fully considered in the calculation of travel time. If actual travel times exceed the projected ones, the result may be a demand for double-tracking of these areas in the future. Verification that projected travel times adequately reflect future operation with single tracks should be provided in an SDEIS/R. L-064.19

We also request clarification regarding how maintenance and emergency access to rail lines through sensitive areas will be provided, including on the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp. The DEIS/R identifies "not constructing maintenance roads along the rail corridors" as a potential measure to reduce L-064.20

impacts to wetlands and rare species habitat. We commend this effort, but request that the proponent describe how the absence of maintenance and emergency access roads in certain areas would impact future train operations. While service vehicles can run on tracks, analysis is needed as to how that would be accomplished without interfering with train schedules. If lack of access for maintenance or emergencies becomes an issue, access roads and/or sidings may be constructed in the future, possibly resulting in significantly increased impacts. Measures (i.e., single tracking without separate service access) that are not likely to be viable over the long term should not be counted as impact avoidance when evaluating the total impacts of specific alternatives.

L-064.20

As noted above, the Stoughton route would result in the diversion of a perennial stream that currently runs along the abandoned railroad berm for a distance of ½ mile in the area north of the Raynham Dog Track. The DEIS/R states on p. 4-16-81, “It is presumed that this stream would be re-routed to its original and restored/stabilized channel, and hence this relocation to and restoration of the original stream channel would be a beneficial impact.” The DEIS/R does not describe how the location of the original channel would be determined or where it is located. Plans for the proposed relocation should be provided in a SDEIS/R. Stream relocations usually involve creation of meandering channels, as opposed to a ditch alongside the rail line. The SDEIS/R should clarify whether the relocated channel will involve alteration of existing wetlands within the Hockomock Swamp and if it will be located outside of the ROW. If the relocation falls outside of the ROW on abutting land owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG), it would qualify as an Article 97 impact.

L-064.21

The DEIS/R states on p. 4-16-34, “Blocked culverts and drainage ditches along the right-of-way have formed three wetlands within the rail bed. These wetlands (ST-6, ST-7, and ST-7A) are located within 15 feet north and south of the Stoughton Fish and Game Club access road.” A SDEIS/R should clarify whether impacts to these wetlands from reconstruction of the rail bed have been included in the calculation of wetlands alteration.

L-064.22

**Impacts to rare species:** The DEIS/R states on page 4-15-57 that the Stoughton route would “result in a loss of approximately 32.6 acres within natural areas of five Priority and Estimated Habitat polygons.” Table 4.15-30 on page 4-15-62 shows the “potential habitat loss” as 9.9 acres. The DEIS/R clarifies the difference in the two numbers on page 4-15-28 (Method for Assessing Direct Impacts), stating that “total loss of acres” is the acreage of Priority and Estimated Habitat polygons intersected by the limit of permanent alteration from the project, while “potential habitat loss” is based on vegetative cover types assumed to be used by each of the species within the Priority and Estimated Habitat polygons. The DEIS/R further states that several of the species may use habitat types that were not included in the assumptions used in the DEIS/R and that the assumptions serve as “a general guide to coarsely estimating the level of impact.” The actual amount of habitat impacted is proposed to be determined based on field delineation after the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative is selected.

L-064.23

A coarse estimate of the level of impact to rare species habitat may not be an adequate basis for an accurate determination of which alternative is the “least environmentally damaging.” The SDEIS/R should provide acreage of impacts to rare species habitat that is based on field delineation.

The DEIS/R also describes potential impacts to rare species beyond actual loss of habitat. It states on p. 4-15-47 that existing culverted streams beneath the embankment of the abandoned line provide migratory habitat for wildlife species, and continues:



“In addition to the culverts, the right-of-way itself provides suitable migratory habitat for rare species because there are no tracks and ties to prevent turtles and amphibians from moving across the right-of-way...Much of the embankment has become reforested since the tracks were removed, and is likely to provide suitable feeding, sheltering and overwintering habitat for the blue-spotted salamander and the eastern box turtle...Documented nesting of spotted turtles within the right-of-way of the Stoughton segment indicates that portions of the right-of-way may also provide nesting habitat for the Blanding’s turtle and eastern box turtle.”

The DEIS/R characterizes most of this nesting habitat as “of marginal quality,” It states (p. 4-15-31) that the abandoned rail embankment in the Stoughton route was evaluated under two scenarios: one assuming that the railbed provided habitat for Blanding’s Turtle, Eastern Box Turtle and Blue-spotted Salamander and the other assuming that the railbed does not provide habitat. The proponent should look for evidence of turtle nesting to determine whether or not the railbed provides this habitat and present the conclusions in the SDEIS/R. L-064.24

The DEIS/R states that loss of migratory routes and increase in habitat fragmentation would result “because construction of this (the Stoughton) track would occur within undeveloped forested area.” The project proposes to partially mitigate this impact by construction of an 8,500 foot trestle. We commend this proposal and as noted above, request that the feasibility and cost of construction be ascertained. The DEIS/R indicates that in areas north and south of the proposed trestle, the total barrier effect would be approximately 19,500 feet, including 9,700 feet used by Blanding’s Turtle, 1,400 feet used by Blue-spotted Salamander and 8,400 feet used by Eastern Box Turtle. Disruption of migratory routes can have potentially significant impacts to the survival of rare species. A survey conducted in the Hockomock Swamp in 2008 and 2009 (referenced in the DEIS/R) found that a female Blanding’s Turtle traveled a total of three miles in one year and in 2009 returned to the site used for nesting in 2008. The DEIS/R also acknowledges that some organisms that use vernal pools for breeding return to the same pool year after year and do not seek other pools if the migratory path is blocked. L-064.25

The DEIS/R also states that there would potentially be some fragmentation to Hessel’s Hairstreak habitat caused by widening the canopy gap in the Hockomock Swamp, and that “clearing within 100 feet of vernal pools could lead to the loss of shade within vernal pool habitat that could be used by Blue-spotted Salamander.”

The DEIS/R states that there would be a potential increase in mortality of rare species near streams and wetlands, such as Mocha Emerald and Hessel’s Hairstreak caused by the use of herbicides, but says that these impacts would be reduced by adherence to an approved Vegetation Management Plan restricting the use of herbicides in these areas. The SDEIS/R should include a clear commitment to such a restriction and provide maps that show the location of “no-spray” zones for each alternative. L-064.26

The DEIS/R states at several points that the Stoughton alternative will result in improvement to migration for terrestrial wildlife because “reconstructing these tracks presents opportunities to reconstruct existing culverts or bridges to improve wildlife passage.” Analysis of these opportunities will occur “during final design.” Without specific information about the number and specific location of culverts and bridges to be reconstructed, it is impossible to evaluate the amount of improvement that L-064.27

will occur. Changes in these crossings need to be carefully designed so as not to adversely alter the hydrology of the cedar swamp. The SDEIS/R should provide this analysis.

L-064.27

Table 4-15-30 (“Direct and Indirect Effects to Rare Species from the South Coast Rail Alternatives”) provides NHESP’s scores for barrier impacts and overall loss of habitat functions. The Stoughton route received a score of 6 for barrier impacts, compared to scores of 1.5 for the Attleboro route and 0 for Rapid Bus, and a score of 10.5 for loss of habitat functions, compared to scores of 7.5 for Attleboro and 3 for Rapid Bus (page 4.15.62). The DEIS/R states on page 4-15-31 that NHESP noted that the *ranking* of alternatives by assigning qualitative impact ratings is more important than the calculated acreage of impacts. **Especially considering the higher scores assigned to the Stoughton route**, we request that the SDEIS/R provide a more detailed overall examination of specific impacts to state-listed species and habitat as specifically requested above.

L-064.28

**Indirect impacts/impacts to biodiversity.** The DEIS/R acknowledges that the rail line south of Stoughton Station “has been abandoned for several decades with the tracks and ties removed in most places and vegetation covering much of the embankment.” It also states that “existing blocks of contiguous habitat would be fragmented and edge effects would be introduced” as a result of clearing of the canopy along the ROW that would be needed to re-establish train service along the corridor (p. 4-16-82). The DEIS/R identifies in Chapter 4-14 general impacts to biodiversity that may result from fragmentation and “edge effects,” including spread of invasive species, decrease in species dependent on core and/or undisturbed habitat, impacts of noise and predation and impacts of changes in light, temperature, chemical composition, hydrology or other factors on vegetation and aquatic ecosystems.

L-064.29

The indirect impacts of the Stoughton route are evaluated on pages 4-14-83 ff. This section generally dismisses the significance of these impacts. One reason cited is the limited width of the canopy gap, identified here as “40’”. We note that other sections of the DEIS/R refer to the canopy gap through the Hockomock Swamp as “40 to 80’”. The SDEIS/R should clarify how wide the canopy gap will be; if the gap may be as large as 80’, the SDEIS/R should evaluate the impacts that would potentially result.

The DEIS/R states on p. 4-14-85, “Although the Stoughton Alternative would increase the canopy gap and create a partial barrier to vertebrate movement, the Hockomock Swamp would continue to provide moderate to large-sized forest blocks.” The fact that some unfragmented forest blocks would remain does not mean that significant loss of ecological function and value would not occur. That loss was assessed through application of the University of Massachusetts’

CAPS model. This model measures the loss of ecological integrity and biodiversity that would result from each alternative. Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to support plants and animals and the natural processes necessary to sustain them over the long term. The CAPS model establishes a grid over the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and calculates the “index of ecological integrity” for each cell of the grid based on eight different ecological factors.

In contrast to the DEIS/R’s characterization of the indirect impacts of the Stoughton route as “minimal,” the CAPS analysis presented a different conclusion, indicating that the Stoughton alternative would result in a major loss of ecological integrity. This loss would be 456.9 units, compared to 324.8 units for the Attleboro alternative and zero for Rapid Bus. The CAPS analysis attributes a large portion of this loss to “indirect impacts.” The map in the CAPS analysis illustrates that fragmentation impacts would extend far into the Hockomock Swamp.

L-064.30



Regarding impacts to the Pine Swamp, the DEIS/R states, “Reconstructing the rail could create a barrier to the movement of vernal pool organisms between pools or between breeding and non-breeding habitat;” also that “Reconstructing the track would require vegetation removal which could alter the microclimate of vernal pools close to the track” (p. 4.14-87).

L-064.30

The conclusions of the CAPS analysis are relevant to the determination of the project’s potential adverse environmental impacts to aquatic ecosystems, selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Preferred Alternative, and mitigation that should be required if the Stoughton alternative is selected. We request that the conclusions of this analysis be examined in more detail in a SDEIS/R.

**Potential “taking” of open space land protected by federal, state or municipal governments**

(“Section 4F taking”): 49 USC 303 prohibits use of federal funds to take land from federal, state or local parks and similar public open space, unless there is no feasible alternative and adequate mitigation is provided. As noted above, the rail right-of-way for the Stoughton route passes through the Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area, the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation and the Pine Swamp, areas that fall under state or municipal ownership and are protected by Article 97 of the *Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. The DEIS/R fails to identify the width of the ROW in these areas and provides no diagrams or other information to demonstrate that reconstruction of the rail lines can be confined within the ROW. It is our understanding that the ROW through the Hockomock Swamp is 60’ wide, but the DEIS/R indicates that the canopy opening may be up to 80’ wide. Clarification is needed about whether all work will fall within the ROW. We request that this information be provided in a SDEIS/R.

L-064.31

**Induced growth:** The DEIS/R also identifies projected impacts of induced growth and development from the project, compared to the “no build” scenario. Examples of the projected impacts are: increased vehicle miles traveled (VMTs); increases in greenhouse gas emissions related to new dispersed development; and loss of forest and farmland. The Stoughton Alternative would add 75,422 VMTs per day and 20,750 tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions, and would increase loss of forestland by 575 acres and loss of farmland by 313 acres over the “no-build” alternative. The DEIS/R acknowledges the likelihood that loss of forest land would also result in loss of carbon sequestration, but does not quantify additional greenhouse gas emissions increases that would result as it should. The Massachusetts’ 2010 *Statewide Forest Resource Assessment* used a study by Pregitzer and Euskichen (2004) to estimate carbon sequestration at 0.85 tons per year for forests aged 71-120 years. Using that figure, loss of 575 acres of forestland caused by induced growth associated with the Stoughton route would reduce carbon sequestration by approximately 488 tons per year, plus the conversion losses of stored carbon when forest is removed. A SDEIS/R should acknowledge this.

L-064.32

The DEIS/R states that these impacts would be reduced by implementation of the Corridor Plan and evaluates the degree of mitigation provided by “high” and “low” implementation scenarios. Mass Audubon supports vigorous implementation of the Corridor Plan to achieve the goals identified in the DEIS/R of reducing land conversion, travel and VMTs, greenhouse gas emissions, water use and other factors. We are concerned that the DEIS/R fails to provide a detailed blueprint for that implementation to ensure that impacts of induced growth will in fact be offset, and other projected benefits will be provided. The DEIS/R states on page 5-70 that the SCR project with implementation of smart growth measures would “have a beneficial impact of unknown magnitude” on protected open

L-064.33

space; Table 5-24 also describes the incremental change in protected open space from the no-build scenario as “unknown.” We request that a detailed implementation plan be developed and included in an SDEIS/R which includes a demonstrated financial commitment to the needed state, regional and local planning and land use regulatory reforms that will be needed to fully implement the Corridor Plan.

L-064.33

The DEIS/R states on page 5-57 that the Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) in the SCR Corridor Plan represent 139,758 acres in the South Coast communities. We request clarification of how much of that acreage is already under permanent protection and therefore would not represent an opportunity to increase future protection of open space. For example, the PPAs of Fall River and Freetown include the 13,800-acre Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, currently protected. Lakeville’s PPA includes Mass Audubon’s 954-acre Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary, New Bedford’s PPA includes the Acushnet Cedar and the PPAs for Easton, Raynham and Taunton include portions of the Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management area, also currently protected.

L-064.34

### **Mitigation Plans**

The MEPA Certificate on the ENF required detailed plans for mitigation of impacts to wetlands, rare species and biodiversity, as follows:

L-064.35

**Wetlands** (page 27 ff of MEPA Certificate): *The DEIR should include a detailed description of measures to avoid and minimize wetland impacts for each of the alternatives. The DEIR should also include a comprehensive mitigation plan for any unavoidable impacts, explain why these impacts are unavoidable, and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent feasible. The mitigation plan should address permanent and temporary impacts and construction-related impacts...The DEIR should describe proposed wetlands mitigation areas and identify locations on maps and site plans. As noted in the MassDEP comment letter, there is flexibility within the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. The DEIR should describe how mitigation sites will be designed to preserve critical functions such as flood storage volume at each locality. The DEIR should discuss ownership of the sites and identify any proposed to be taken by eminent domain. The DEIR should provide details on any replication proposed including the timeframe anticipated and the methods proposed to achieve successful replication. The DEIR should include a monitoring and contingency plan to ensure success of mitigation.*

**Rare species** (page 24): *The DEIR should include a detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for each alternative.*

**Biodiversity** (page 29): *The DEIR should describe measures proposed to avoid and minimize impacts, and include a detailed mitigation plan to address biodiversity impacts. The plan should include an estimate of mitigation costs such as funding for land acquisition, ecological assessment and monitoring programs, wildlife crossings, and other biodiversity conservation efforts. The DEIR should describe in quantitative and qualitative terms the extent to which the mitigation proposed will support biodiversity conservation and reduce or compensate for project-related impacts.*

Despite these specific requirements and the significance of the projected impacts, the DEIS/R fails to provide detailed mitigation plans to replace lost resources and their functions and values and states that



the mitigation plan will be prepared at a later date. Without the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory standards of the MWPA, MESA and the state and federal CWA. For these reasons, we request that you require preparation of a Supplemental DEIS/R.

L-064.35

Our comments on the ENF requested “a review of available information to identify possible candidate areas for restoration of previously filled or destroyed wetland areas within the project corridor” including “current and historic aerial photography, USGS and other maps as well as the historical written records and maps of local and regional agencies documenting local wetlands.” As an example, we cited the Raynham Dog Track site where significant segments of the existing parking lot may well be paved-over former wetlands. We urged that preference should be given to mitigation projects that remove fill or pavement to restore historic wetlands over creation of wetlands in upland. We reiterate these comments, and urge their consideration in an SDEIS/R.

L-064.36

In some cases, projected impacts may be difficult to mitigate. For example, attempts to replicate or restore Atlantic White Cedar Swamp have yielded mixed results in the past, and remains subject to scientific uncertainty. Our comments on the ENF referred to the historical transformation of the portions of Atlantic White Cedar Swamps to red maple in the Hockomock and Assonet Cedar Swamps, noting the hydrologic changes associated with earlier construction of railroad berms in these areas, and we requested that the DEIS/R “investigate ways to restore the downgradient areas as a potential mitigation component of this project.” While the document mentions restoration of Atlantic White Cedar Swamps as a potential mitigation measure, it does not provide a detailed plan for doing this or evaluate the feasibility of success. If the project impacts vernal pools or creates barriers to migration pathways, individuals that use these areas for breeding may not relocate to other pools. Rare species such as Blanding’s Turtle may decline if habitat is fragmented. Invasive plants, once introduced, may be difficult to remove without continuous monitoring, yet the DEIS/R provides no detailed plans for monitoring such areas and removing introduced plants. The NEPA/MEPA review should acknowledge the difficulties of these challenges, and provide detailed mitigation plans with an evaluation of the likelihood of success in an SDEIS/R.

L-064.37

**Project cost and mitigation:** The MEPA Certificate stated: “... cost is one of the key factors being used by EOT in selection of alternatives. The DEIR should include a detailed analysis of costs, including construction, operation and mitigation costs, for each of the alternatives.” The Certificate also stated: “EOT is also basing its elimination and selection of alternatives on the basis of smart growth opportunities along the corridor,” and required “an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project for each alternative, to fully understand the overall costs and rationale for selection of alternatives” (p. 16). As noted above, the document lacks mitigation plans. The cost of mitigation cannot be estimated without the mitigation plans. The Certificate also required a description of “how the proposed rail and/or bus routes, and associated Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan will be financed.” This analysis is not provided. A SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs, an assessment of the costs of implementing the Corridor Plan and an explanation of how the project and Corridor Plan will be financed.

L-064.38

### **Ridership**

The DEIS/R states on page 3-121 that the number of daily work trips from the South Coast area to

Boston was estimated based on Journey-to-Work (JTW) data from 2000. In a January 28, 2011 memo from Scott Peterson of the Central Transportation Planning Staff to the South Coast Rail Group Files, Mr. Peterson stated the analysis showed that there were 8,000 work trips from the SCR study area into the major Boston employment destination. Application of a 15% growth rate resulted in projection of 9,200 JTW trips in 2030. The memo lists the 28 cities and towns in the SCR study area. Several of the municipalities in this list currently have a commuter rail station (e.g., Attleboro, Mansfield, Lakeville) or are located close to one of those stations (e.g., Carver, Freetown, Rochester, Middleborough).

L-064.39

The DEIS projects that the Stoughton Electric Route will attract 4,790 new station boardings, or 61% of the total ridership demand. The DEIS/R does not explain whether/how many of those projected riders are assumed to switch from use of an existing commuter rail line to South Coast Rail. The SDEIS/R should provide the complete analysis that yielded the projection of 4,790 new station boardings on the Stoughton Route and disclose the number of those “new” riders who would be diverted from existing lines.

### **Conclusion**

To provide full disclosure and evaluation of the impacts to natural resources that are likely to result from this project that will enable regulatory officials to determine the project’s compliance with the requirements of applicable laws, we request preparation of a SDEIS/R. If a decision is made to not require preparation of a SDEIS and/or SDEIR, we request that the issues raised in this comment letter be addressed in the Final EIS/R. Thank you for considering these comments.

L-064.40

Sincerely,

Priscilla Chapman  
Taunton Watershed Advocate  
Mass Audubon  
1298 Cohannet Street  
Taunton, MA 02780  
[pchapman@massaudubon.org](mailto:pchapman@massaudubon.org)  
508-828-1104

cc: Kristina Egan, Project Manager, DOT  
DFG Commissioner Mary Griffin  
DEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell  
DCR Commissioner Edward Lambert  
Jon Regosin, NHESP





## Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions

*protecting wetlands, open space and biological diversity through education and advocacy*

April 11, 2011

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
SCREIS@usace.army.mil

Secretary Richard Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and  
Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02110  
aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us

Timothy Timmermann  
USEPA REGION 1 - New England  
5 Post Office Square  
Mail Code ORA17-1  
Boston, MA 02109-3912

**Re: Request For Extension of Comment period; South Coast Rail Project File # NAE-2077-00698, EEA #14346**

Dear Sirs:

The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC), a not for profit organization representing more than 350 conservation commissions throughout the Commonwealth, is hereby requesting a 90 day extension of the closing date for receipt of comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the South Coast Rail Project, US ACOE Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698, EEA #14346. MACC, as a pre-eminent wetlands advocacy and educational organization within Massachusetts, is highly interested in reviewing the DEIS/DEIR because of the potential impact on sensitive wetland and other environmental resources throughout the South Coast area. Our Board of Directors and membership, which includes a number of highly regarded experts in wetland systems and various branches of environmental law and science,

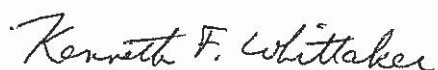
L-002.01

have confirmed their intention to carefully review this document. We believe those individuals, on their own behalf and that of MACC, will provide essential, beneficial and detailed review of the study and its conclusions. Furthermore, we are aware of strong interest in this project from concerned individuals and our member conservation commissioners in a number of municipalities on and in the vicinity of the proposed routes identified in that study. As part of our representational responsibilities we recognize a duty to provide a forum for the development and submission of comments from those interested parties as well.

Given the scope, and scale of the DEIS/DEIR comprising more than 2500 pages of detailed technical data and analyses, the complexity and diversity of the subject matter addressed, MACC believes it and other parties have not been afforded sufficient time to prepare for, develop, compile and submit the level of commentary that this ambitious environmental impact review requires and deserves. To allow proper and reasonably complete review of such a massive study, we respectfully ask for a 90 day extension until August 26, 2011. L-002.02

We would appreciate if you would advise MACC, through us, of your response to this request via email at and/or via surface mail, to our attention, at the address one page one of this letter. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,



Kenneth F. Whittaker, Ph.D., Esq.,  
Vice President for Advocacy, MACC

Partner,  
Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan, LLP



Linda Orel  
Executive Director

Cc: Kristina Egan





May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Project Manager  
Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA)  
Attn: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
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Via Email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)  
[aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

Re: **Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/R) for South Coast  
Rail NAE-2007-00698 and EOEEA #14346**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) thanks you for the opportunity to submit comments with respect to the combined Draft Environmental Impact Review/Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIR/DEIS") for the proposed South Coast Rail Project.

MACC represents the 2,400 Conservation Commissioners in the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth, charged with protecting the natural resources of their communities under the Conservation Commission Act (G.L. Ch.40 sec.8c) and with administering and enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. Ch.131 sec.40). MACC's mission is to promote strong, workable, science-based laws, regulations, and policies regarding wetlands, other water resources, open space and biological diversity.

Conservation Commissions and the communities they serve will be directly impacted by the proposed South Coast Rail project. We have been in coordination with some of them, and their individual members, in developing these comments. Nevertheless, these comments are submitted solely on behalf of MACC, and our intent is to speak from the broad perspective of wetlands and natural resource preservation throughout the entire

designated south coastal area. We offer these comments in concert with other environmental organizations which address a wide range of other topics regarding impacts to water resources, impacts to rare and endangered species habitat, proposed sacrifices of designated public lands, biodiversity issues and a range of other considerations.

MACC commends the effort in completing the DEIR/DEIS document. However, the DEIS is overly broad and lacking in specificity and detail, especially with regard to the estimation of wetlands and habitat impacts and the proposed mitigation measures to account for these impacts. The document defers analysis of proposed mitigation measures for wetland and habitat loss based on assumed uncertainties in final construction and layout details, yet the MEPA Certificate on the ENF clearly calls for the presentation of such a mitigation plan in reasonable detail. The DEIR/DEIS falls short of fulfilling the requirements of the MEPA scope in numerous specific areas.

L-080.01

In the document, a number of preliminary design decisions, which will have substantial environmental impacts, have been given only passing consideration. One example of this would be the failure to consider appropriate access allowances for 3.3 miles of single line of the rail proceeding through the Hockomock Swamp for repair and emergency response services. Although we appreciate the environmental considerations which led to this decision of a single line, we question whether an honest assessment of the likely full range of those impacts is possible without more detailed consideration of emergency access, maintenance, and other safety issues associated with a “stranded” single line layout.

L-080.02

Moreover, the overall level of the analysis is insufficient to determine the full range of impacts for the preferred alternative and, in so doing, gives short shrift to the difficulties that will be encountered in meeting the requirements of the project to comply with critical environmental laws, including the federal and state Clean Water Acts, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and Article 97 of the State Constitution<sup>1</sup>.

L-080.03

MACC believes strongly that the estimation of likely impacts on wetlands-related resources and the scope of needed mitigation means and methods, as briefly summarized in the following comments, do not meet the standards set forth in the MEPA Certificate. In order to address these deficiencies, additional analysis is needed, which would best be provided via a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR. At a minimum, the serious concerns related to an underestimation of the full range of impacts - present in the current document - should be addressed in appropriate detail and scope in the Final EIR/EIS for this project.

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<sup>1</sup> We note as well that pursuant to Section 4f of the USDOT Act of 1966 that federal transportation funds may not be used to take land from federal state or local parks and similar public open space unless 1) there is no feasible alternative, 2) that mitigation is provided or the impacts of the work are found to be “*de minimis*.” Proper estimation of the needed right of way is essential to determine what aspects of this statute will apply.



- Sufficient detail has not been provided to determine the full range of impacts that will be associated with the inevitable fragmentation of the major wetlands associated with the preferred Stoughton alternative, the major impact on highly sensitive populations including loss of over 32 acres from the habitat of nine state-listed species, and the potentially serious impacts that even slight changes in hydrology (related to stream relocation and construction/replacement of stream crossings) may have on the rare Atlantic White Cedar Swamp ecosystem. L-080.04
- The DEIS/DEIR has substantially underreported the full number and distribution of affected vernal pool habitats, in addition to the likely substantial impacts within 100 feet of those pools as identified in the document. L-080.05
- No specific information is presented regarding mitigation measures that will be undertaken to comply with requirements under the Clean Water Act, WPA, and MESA. Variances under the WPA and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act will be needed. Such variances are contingent on a variety of findings, including a determination that proposed mitigation measures will contribute to the protection of interests identified in these laws. The absence of concrete mitigation planning in many instances raises significant concerns as to how such mitigation measures are to be structured, permitted and funded. L-080.06
- Overall, MACC is highly concerned with the continuing, un-fragmented viability of the Hockomock Swamp and preservation of its unique status as the largest freshwater wetland in the Commonwealth. The fragmentation issues associated with the loss of forest canopy, and the apparent balkanization of the hydrologic analysis related to the various stream crossings suggest that the level of detail offered is simply insufficient to determine the full range of plausible impacts and the degree of difficulty associated with their compensation. The Conservation and Assessment Prioritization System analysis included in the DEIR/DEIS shows that large areas of this natural area will suffer significant loss of ecological integrity. These impacts extend well beyond the boundaries of the rail right-of-way, and will affect Article 97 lands owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, all in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. L-080.07
- The issues associated with the acquisition and indirect alteration of protected lands have not been adequately considered. Further consideration of the legal and access difficulties should be addressed. L-080.08

MACC does not offer these comments by way of criticism, and commends the level of effort and scope of activity that has been carried out in preparing the DEIS/DEIR for public review. At the same time, there is a perceived public preference for certain rail line alternatives at the expense of the bus line alternative which presents ecological impacts that are only a tiny fraction of those expected from rail line construction. Given this compelling logic, it appears reasonable and fair to expect that the full extent of those rail line impacts, and an honest assessment of the difficulties and feasibility of necessary mitigation methods, should be presented. MACC hopes to see some of this hard thinking ; L-080.09

and detailed assessment, in the next phase of the analysis which we hope will comprise a Supplement document to the DEIR/DEIS.

L-080.09

Very truly yours,

Ken Whittaker  
Director of Advocacy

Linda Orel  
Executive Director





# MASSACHUSETTS Rivers Alliance

14 Beacon Street, Suite 706, Boston, MA 02108  
(857) 445-0208 • [www.massriversalliance.org](http://www.massriversalliance.org)

May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Project Manager  
Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA)  
Attn: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
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Via Email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)  
[aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

Re: **Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/R) for South Coast Rail  
NAE-2007-00698 and EOEEA #14346**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance I am pleased to submit these comments on the DEIR/S for the South Coast Rail project. The Alliance's mission is to protect and restore rivers across the Commonwealth. The Alliance supports public transit and smart growth as measures to promote sustainable development patterns to reduce future growth impacts on the commonwealth's rivers and other important environmental assets. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) preferred alternative for the project has substantial impacts to streams (over 50 stream crossings, relocation of ½ mile of a perennial stream); wetlands (12 acres of alteration, dozens of vernal pools within 100 feet of the work); rare species habitats; and state, local and private conservation lands. Therefore it is important that the environmental review processes through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) thoroughly document and analyze project impacts, alternatives to avoid and minimize impacts, and that the state require mitigation to compensate for unavoidable impacts.

L-062.01

Additional Information Needed: The MEPA Certificate on the ENF provided an extensive and detailed scope for review, including requirements for presentation of mitigation plans in the Draft EIR. The

L-062.02

DEIS/R falls short of fully documenting impacts and mitigation as described in the scope and as necessary to ensure the project will fully meet requirements of key environmental laws including the federal and state Clean Water Acts, Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and Article 97 of the State Constitution protecting public conservation lands. The Alliance requests that a Supplemental DEIS/R be prepared to provide the additional information needed, or if this request is denied, that the Final EIS/R provide this information.

L-062.02

Fragmentation of Hockomock Swamp: DOT's preferred alternative for the project is the Stoughton route, involving reconstruction of a long-abandoned rail line through the Hockomock Swamp. The rails and ties were removed decades ago and the corridor has overgrown, nearly closing the canopy in most areas. The Conservation and Assessment Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis performed by UMass for the project found that reconstructing a rail line along this corridor would significantly impact the ecological integrity of the swamp. Work would also traverse the Pine Swamp in Raynham, and existing freight lines would be upgraded including sections running through Mass Audubon's Assonet Cedar Swamp and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Acushnet Cedar Swamp.

L-062.03

The Hockomock Swamp is the largest freshwater wetland in Massachusetts and an Area of Critical Environmental Concern; most of the swamp is owned by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), except for the rail right-of-way. The Hockomock and other areas impacted by the project support Atlantic White Cedar Swamp natural communities which are rare and sensitive to even slight alterations in hydrology. Habitat of nine state-listed rare species would be altered by the project.

Stream Relocation and Culvert Crossings: A perennial stream presently flows along the rail right-of-way for a distance of ½ mile in the Hockomock Swamp. The DEIS/R states that this stream will be improved by relocating it outside of the right-of-way but does not provide any information or plans for that relocation. Since the abutting land is swamp owned by DFG, it appears likely that additional impacts to wetlands, rare species habitat, and Article 97 lands will be required for the stream relocation. The DEIS/R also indicates that numerous stream crossings along the entire route of the project will need to be reconstructed. Since many of these streams flow through abutting wetlands and rare species habitats protected by state, local, or private conservation organizations plans for each site of culvert work are needed to fully document project impacts and mitigation. The Rivers Alliance supports upgrading of existing culverts to meet the stream crossing standards to the extent feasible, provided detailed analyses are performed to ensure that adverse impacts to hydrology of Atlantic White Cedar Swamps will be avoided.

L-062.04

L-062.05

In conclusion, the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance respectfully requests that additional, detailed analysis of project impacts and mitigation be provided in the next phase of NEPA/MEPA review.

Sincerely,



Julia Blatt  
Executive Director







May 26, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil  
Department of the Army Permit Application Number NAE-2007-00698

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
Attn: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Analyst  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
MEPA Office EOEEA #14346

**Sierra Club Comments on South Coast Rail Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft Environmental Impact Report**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

On behalf of the Sierra Club we offer the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft Environmental Impact Report on the South Coast Rail Project proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DEIS/R).

**Challenges and Opportunities**

Transportation affects people's lives on a daily basis, and when transportation options are limited to one possibility – usually driving – the quality of everyone's life suffers. The transportation sector is Massachusetts's greatest source of carbon dioxide emissions, and vehicle emissions have been associated with increased rates of asthma, respiratory diseases, and lung cancer. Transportation inequities mean that low-income and minority communities are exposed to more pollution and are given less opportunities for jobs and affordable housing than affluent communities.

The state's disinvestment in public transportation is one of the primary reasons that Massachusetts lacks transportation options. Sprawl also contributes to transportation problems: when housing patterns are diffuse, people are forced to drive. The main opportunity is to treat transportation as an integral piece of smart growth planning, affordable housing development, and energy policy. Restoration of rail to the south coast via the proposed Stoughton alternative has great potential to reduce sprawl, guide development, discourage travel by car, link workers with jobs, and stimulate economic growth with less environmental impacts than an automobile-centric approach.

Ridership is the key component to making any train service sustainable. It is for this reason that the Sierra Club has stated publicly the Stoughton alignment may ultimately represent the least environmentally damaging alternative to restore service. Project calculations indicate that other alignments would not attract sufficient ridership to make the service viable.

L-075.01

The inclusion of an electric option for train service is important. The negative impacts of land required for transformer stations / pole bases, and an elevated price for the project, could be outweighed by the significant advantages of less noise, less diesel fuel pollution, better acceleration of the trains, and higher average speed which will reduce travel times.

L-075.02

### **No-Build Analysis Needed**

Early in the review process the Sierra Club had requested at public meetings that a comprehensive “no-build” analysis be presented to the public. We believe this context is essential to understand the impacts of *not* building the South Coast rail project so the public can better understand the choices being made today that will impact not only sensitive natural resources, but also their quality of life in the future. The documents do not seem to contain an analysis that describes highway or other expansion that may be necessary to accommodate increased population and traffic if the project is not built, nor what the region may look like in the future if the smart growth measures proposed by the project are not implemented and growth patterns are instead driven by non-transit-oriented development.

L-075.03

### **The Preferred Alternative and Trestle Design**

The DEIS/R addresses three options, two of them rail and the third an enhanced bus route. The Sierra Club believes that the Stoughton Alternative, which we acknowledge passes through old seaport cities, rural towns and wetlands, has the potential to create smart growth opportunities for all communities on the route, as well as reduce the need for continued highway expansion through the region. It should be noted that highways already pass through most if not all the same areas that are now proposed for the rail expansion.

L-075.04

South Coast Rail also has the potential to improve environmental elements along the way because it could be used to restore hydrological connections between parts of the Hockomock Swamp that were isolated when the original rail bed construction took place in the 1890's. It is for this reason that the Sierra Club previously supported a trestle design for rights of way through wetland areas. However, our review of the document indicates that the trestle would largely be built on the existing embankment with only periodic culverts to allow for slightly increased wetlands connectivity.

L-075.05

The proponents should apply all knowledge available to help utilize the construction window to improve the hydrology and functions of the wetlands system. Location and function of culverts is as important as keeping them clear and flowing. The restoration should address in detail wildlife corridors and where best to locate them, especially due to the presence of vernal pools and rare species in the vicinity of the rail bed. Both wet and dry wildlife crossings should be described and provided for.



We request that the alternative thoroughly analyze other trestle designs that may increase connectivity in the wetlands so that the project truly creates a benefit to the areas impacted by the existing rail bed. While we are not experts on this matter, we envision that much of the existing embankment could be removed and still allow for the servicing of the rail line. This could mitigate impacts by improving the hydrology of the wetlands.

L-075.06

The DEIS/R considers adding larger culverts, improving the existing openings and using the existing grade as the base. The possibility of the old railway grade being dug out from a machine located on the new trestle and the spoil transported by rail to some place or other not close by should be examined. We request this option, or something similar to achieve the desired goals, be explored in more detail. The analysis should describe construction techniques and design elements that will be implemented to minimize the environmental impact.

L-075.07

One issue not mentioned in the DEIS/R is the failure to consider what would happen to the existing embankment if the Stoughton Alternative is *not* chosen. ATV's are now using the route extensively and the earth surface at grade is being spread into the adjoining swamps, streams and vernal pools. Subsequent use of the embankment by trespassers and ATV's could be minimized by reactivation of the rail corridor.

L-075.08

### **Regional Rail Capacity**

Not only is the Stoughton Alternative the shortest of the three options – an important consideration for passengers – it can also resolve a major concern at the already crowded platforms at South Station congestion by lengthening the route of the already existing Stoughton trains. We are however concerned about the present and future capacities of South Station to handle the increased ridership the Stoughton branch would bring.

L-075.09

Both North and South station, as part of a broken northeast rail system, cannot handle indefinitely the increased ridership at both ends as long as there exists no connector between the two stations. As each new project on the fringe of the system connects into a dead-end system (as it exists now) the need is increased to construct the North-South Rail Link to provide the system the elasticity to expand and absorb increased and future demands on ridership. The creation of a "flow -through" system with the North-South Rail Link would increase ridership and efficiencies on the entire system, including the Stoughton alternative.

### **Mitigation Plans**

While the DEIS/R appears to have included mitigation costs as part of the overall budget, it is difficult to understand the mitigation costs without a comprehensive mitigation plan that identifies where and how mitigation will occur. This should be more thoroughly analyzed to enable the public to fully understand the implications of the project and how impacts will be mitigated. Some wetland areas likely to be impacted by the project have been difficult to replicate.

L-075.10

## Conclusion

We look forward to continued review of either supplemental or final documents that address our comments. The Sierra Club recognizes that this project raises concerns regarding impacts on sensitive natural areas. The review must accurately describe impacts given that there clearly is a “balancing act” occurring that weighs the benefits of rail service against wetlands, rare species, and vernal pool habitat. Ultimately, we must ask, what will the South Coast look like 20 years from now if population increases in the area *without the commuter rail line* and highways must be expanded in sensitive natural areas instead to accommodate growth in southeastern Massachusetts?

L-075.11

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the efforts of state and federal agencies to promote better public transportation choices for the south coast. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James McCaffrey", is written over a horizontal line.

James McCaffrey  
Director, Massachusetts Sierra Club



# LEATHAM & ASSOCIATES, *Certified Public Accountants*

---

Douglas R. Leatham, CPA  
Agata Caron, M.Ec

Telephone: 508-996-5282

26 April 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corp of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MD 01742-2751

Re: **South Coast Rail Project**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

Members of the Government Affairs Committee of the *Greater New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce* reviewed and discussed your draft report on the environmental impact of the several proposed routes, and were very pleased you appear to have come to the same conclusion as that of many members of the Massachusetts legislative delegation: that **the Stoughton family of alternatives makes the most sense**...from both an environmental as well as an economic standpoint.

L-006.01

We in the Southcoast have been wishing for the passenger rail line to come to New Bedford and Fall River since the 1980's. Not only would the rail enable Massachusetts residents to travel south to our beautiful coastal area, it would also relieve the congestion on the roadways for those headed northward to Boston and environs. As you well know, commuters traveling by rail generate so much less in hydro-carbons to pollute our precious air. And, according to your draft report, you seem to support the idea that **the Stoughton route** would pose the least environmental risk.

Thank you for your careful and thoughtful consideration of the various alternatives, and we look forward to your final report and recommendations.

Sincerely,

*Doug Leatham*

**Comments of Roy Nascimento  
President & CEO  
New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce**

**Before a public hearing of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement on SouthCoast Rail**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2011  
Qualters Middle School  
Mansfield, MA**

**7:00 P.M.**

Good evening, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment today on the draft environmental impact statement prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the SouthCoast Rail project. My name is Roy Nascimento and I am President and CEO of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce is a private, non-profit business association that serves nearly 1,000 member businesses of all sizes from virtually all industries in ten communities in the SouthCoast region. Our mission is to serve the interests of member businesses while advocating business advancement, economic growth and job creation for the benefit of New Bedford and the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts.

Let me begin by thanking and commending the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners for a thorough and objective analysis of the South Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement dated February, 2011.

R-002.01

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce remains a strong advocate for the extension of commuter rail service from Boston to New Bedford and other communities in the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts.

The Chamber agrees with the conclusions that identify the Stoughton alternative as providing the best service to the communities in the SouthCoast region and providing the least environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective. Also, the fact that the Stoughton route follows rail beds that were in use a little over fifty years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.

We believe the final report should include double tracking the rail lines to provide future capacity and faster service. It is important that any design, permitting, and building of the rail service be completed with an eye towards enhancing or expanding the service in the future.

R-002.02

In addition, the Chamber also believes that travel time and frequency of service will be important factors to the success of this project. To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel time

R-002.03



from the SouthCoast to Boston South Station be no more than seventy minutes. Shorter commuting time gives businesses greater access to more workers with specialized skills, while residents of the region gain connectivity to employment opportunities along the Route 128 corridor and in the business districts of Boston. We also encourage full service throughout the day to meet demand and encourage ridership. A minimum of three trains in the morning peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak period should be utilized. This includes full weekend service and inter-city service between Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River to encourage regional mobility. We would also like to see a late evening train service to Boston to be considered for residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service would help support our growing tourism economy by connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our national park, our ferry service to Martha's Vineyard, and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene here in the SouthCoast.

R-002.03

The Chamber believes commuter rail extension is critical to economic development and growth in the region and in keeping with long-range "Smart Growth" planning strategies that support the environment and encourage development around priority development areas. Commuter rail extension to the SouthCoast will also help meet existing and future demand for public transportation and enhance regional mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region by reducing congestion and increasing travel choice.

R-002.04

On behalf of our Chamber member businesses and their thousands of employees, we encourage the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This is an important project for the SouthCoast region. The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a 50-mile radius of Boston without rail transit service, service that will provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the state. We have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for this process to be completed, so that the state can move onto the next critical step in the project.

R-002.05

Thank you. We appreciate your consideration of our views on this very important economic development issue.

Roy M. Nascimento, IOM  
New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce

---

**From:** Derek Santos [dsantos@nbedc.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2011 9:22 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Cc:** Jill Maclean; kristina.egan@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail-written comments from the New Bedford Economic Development Council  
**Attachments:** south coast rail final EIS-EIR comment letter army corps 5.15.11.pdf

Alan,

Please find attached a PDF copy of the written comments of the New Bedford Economic Development Council regarding the DEIS/DEIR for the South Coast Rail Project. This project is vital to continuing our economic growth and we would like to thank you for this opportunity to comment in writing.

Should you have any questions or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best,

**Derek Santos**  
Director of Business Development

**New Bedford Economic Development Council**  
1213 Purchase Street, Floor 3  
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May 15, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

**RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report for the South Coast Rail Project**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

The New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC) would like to take this opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report for the South Coast Rail Project proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

The NBEDC fully supports the South Coast Rail project, and specifically supports the proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative as the most viable alternative with the least impact to wetlands and wildlife than any other alternative. L-030.01

As the lead economic development agency for the City of New Bedford, the NBEDC has a mission to work collaboratively at the city, state, and federal levels to promote sustainable job retention and creation. To achieve this mission we are implementing a balanced, aggressive, and multi-faceted strategy for economic development of which re-establishing commuter rail service to Boston is a critical component. South Coast Rail is a central element to our transportation goals outlined in the City's master plan, *New Bedford 2020*, and will serve as a catalyst for private investment and job creation. L-030.02

The proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative will be a catalyst for targeted economic growth along the corridor creating 2000 jobs and \$228 million in private investment by 2030. In New Bedford we are now constructing three new rail bridges for the project through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grant Program, and are implementing new zoning for Transportation Oriented Districts in the areas of the two station locations. The two South Cost Rail stations in New Bedford will promote the development of 1750 new housing units and 750,000 square feet of new commercial space.

New Bedford has long been an underserved region of the state and the proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative will support smart growth in an urban center while providing the fastest service that serves the greatest amount of passengers.

This project has been studied since 1990 and with continued delay only comes increases in project cost and no advancement of the transportation network to the New Bedford Region. This project has been fully studied, is well planned, and has always had civic engagement as a central element to its advancement. Any further extension of the comment period is unwarranted.

L-030.03

We urge that the Final EIS/EIR address only the Stoughton Electric Alternative and the immediate opportunities to begin construction of the line from New Bedford to Taunton.

L-030.04

Should you require any additional information from the NBEDC please do not hesitate to call or email.

Sincerely,



Matthew A. Morrissey,  
Executive Director  
mmorrissey@nbedc.org



**From:** David Slutz [dslutz@precixinc.com]

**Sent:** Friday, April 15, 2011 5:27 PM

**To:** SCREIS, NAE

**Subject:** South coast Rail

Good afternoon, Alan:

I am writing to you today to support south coast rail (to both New Bedford and Fall River). I am writing to you as both business owner/operator and resident of the south coast.

Our region continues to grow and we are the gateway to the Islands for thousands of people traveling to/from Martha's Vineyard. Every morning literally thousands of cars make the trek up 140 to 24 and beyond to get to jobs downtown and inside/around 128 - many of these folks are prime candidates for rail and deserve this option (as those who make their way down here for the ferry deserve this option).

E-015.01

Moving forward on this project, which I and countless others hope is "a go," please keep the following in mind:

1. The path/tracks should allow for expansion - we are the fastest growing region in the state and I don't see this changing anytime soon;
2. Travel time to South Station needs to be kept to 70 minutes or less if at all possible;
3. Encourage folks to use the train and not parking offsite by keeping onsite parking fees low. Since the system increased parking fees I have seen the lots far less full than they used to be.

Thank you for reading and thank you for your work and support of this valuable project.

David N. Slutz  
 President & CEO  
 Precix®  
 Makers of Acushnet Rubber O-Rings & Custom Elastomer Solutions  
*Success Demands Precision®*  
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**From:** Anacheka-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:02 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: South Coast Rail DEIS (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

-----Original Message-----

From: Kyla Bennett [mailto:biojustus@comcast.net]  
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 12:14 PM  
To: timmermann.timothy@epa.gov  
Cc: Anacheka-nasemann, Alan R NAE; higgins.elizabeth@epa.gov  
Subject: South Coast Rail DEIS

Hi, Tim. Hope all is well with you.

I attended the south coast rail task force meeting, where Kristina Egan informed us that comments are due on the DEIR/DEIS May 27th. I have not yet received my copy - it is allegedly "in the mail." Even if I started reviewing it tomorrow, it would require me to read, digest, analyze and comment on more than 55 pages per day for the remaining 46 business days before the comment deadline. I find this unreasonable. When I mentioned this to Kristina at the task force meeting yesterday, she told me I "don't have to read the whole thing," as there are sections that are not interesting and not pertinent. For example, she said it was not necessary to read the soils section. I'm sorry, but I plan to read the whole document. I thought that was the point of NEPA. I am hoping that EPA can do something to make the comment period reasonable. Those of us who work full time and have other cases besides this one cannot possibly digest this 2,500+ page document in 46 business days.

E-003.01

I respectfully request that the federal government extend their comment period and give us 120 days to fully digest this voluminous EIS.

Thanks for your consideration,

Kyla

Kyla Bennett, Director  
New England PEER  
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North Easton, MA 02356  
(508) 230-9933  
fax: (508) 230-2110  
email: nepeer@peer.org  
website: www.peer.org

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE





May 27, 2011

ATTN: Aisling Eglington  
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street  
Boston MA 02114  
[Aisling.eglington@state.ma.us](mailto:Aisling.eglington@state.ma.us)

Alan R. Anacheka-Nasemann, PWS  
Senior Project Manager/Ecologist  
Regulatory Division  
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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
[screis@usace.army.mil](mailto:screis@usace.army.mil)

RE: Dept. of Army Permit Application Number **NAE-2007-00698**  
**EOEA #14346/** Comments on the South Coast Rail DEIS/DEIR

Dear Ms. Eglington and Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR). Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) is a Washington D.C.-based non-profit, non-partisan public interest organization concerned with honest and open government. Specifically, PEER serves and protects public employees working on environmental issues. PEER represents thousands of local, state and federal government employees nationwide; our New England chapter is located outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

As you are aware, PEER has been involved with the review of this project since 2001 – nearly a decade. While PEER was initially relieved to hear that the Commonwealth decided to take a “fresh look” at alternatives and the project as a whole, that relief

quickly turned to skepticism. Our attendance at the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force Meetings since their inception has demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the Commonwealth, for whatever reason, would do whatever it could to stubbornly cling to this ill-advised and potentially illegal alternative. We have spent countless hours reviewing and commenting on Environmental Notification Forms, Corridor Plans, ridership analyses, and various other documents, only to discover that our comments are rarely taken seriously or given due consideration.

L-061.01

To add insult to injury, both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Commonwealth have unreasonably restricted the review period of this massive, 2,500+ page DEIS/DEIR to 46 business days. Many individuals, environmental groups, and legislators respectfully requested that you extend the comment period to allow time for a comprehensive review of the DEIS/DEIR; however, an extension was denied. While struggling through the volumes of information, it has become abundantly clear to us that neither the Corps nor the Commonwealth could possibly have read the document thoroughly. For example, the DEIS/DEIR states:

Since the South Coast Rail Build Alternatives would result in the discharge of fill material into greater than one acre of waters of the U.S., including wetlands, a Department of the Army Individual Standard Permit is required (DEIS/DEIR p. 3-1).

The Corps requires individual permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, for anything that has more than minimal impacts, not just fills larger than one acre. It is obvious errors such as these that lead us to believe that neither the Corps nor MassDOT had time to read this document. It is difficult to fathom how the Corps could produce a document that misstates its own regulations.

The errors and misinformation peppered throughout the volumes, not to mention the lack of necessary information, are so numerous that the document was almost impossible to navigate and digest. Moreover, navigation of the document was very difficult, with Figures and Appendices taking several minutes to load – each – even on fast, new computers. As such, our comments today are limited to what we could glean from this confusing and poorly written DEIS/DEIR. Since many of the errors create a domino effect of further errors, the document is practically useless. For example, as discussed in more detail below, the failure to consistently define the South Coast Region on which all the analyses are based – ridership, economics, impacts, air quality benefits, etc. – render the entire alternatives analysis, and hence the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review, worthless.

Nevertheless, we have spent considerable time reviewing the DEIS/DEIR and writing this letter in the infinitesimal hope that a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR will be issued to correct the errors and present an unbiased and comprehensive document – one that complies with the requirements of NEPA and MEPA. We sincerely hope that we have not wasted our time yet again.



Our specific comments on the document are set forth below.

**The Commonwealth did not adequately address concerns articulated in response to the ENF.** As you are aware, PEER previously submitted comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the South Coast rail project, as well as the scope of the federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the state Environmental Impact Report (EIR). However, the responses to these comments, included in the DEIS/DEIR in an Appendix, are primarily non-responsive. Others refer the reader to incorrect sections in the DEIS/DEIR for responses to their comments. For example, comments on PEER's letters state that Table 3.3-12 in the DEIS/DEIR describes the cost per rider. However, Table 3.3-12 actually portrays the proposed construction schedule. This is not an isolated example; the errata contained throughout the documents made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to navigate the information. At the very least, MassDOT's responses should not send readers on a wild goose chase for the correct information.

L-061.02

**The purpose and need for the project.** 33 CFR 320.4(a)2(i) states that the Corps must consider in its Section 404 decision-making, among other things, "[t]he relative extent of the public and private need for the proposed structure or work." In order to assess the practicability of alternatives, and ultimately determine the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA), the Corps must identify a basic project purpose for each project. In this case, the Corps and the Commonwealth have identified similar yet unique project purposes for this project. As such, as PEER has stated numerous times, there is an inherent conflict between the state and federal processes. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) claims that its project purpose statement is merely "a statement of the Commonwealth's objectives in advancing the project" (see p. 362 of Appendix 8, comment N-025-003. However, it is much more than that. By narrowly defining the project purpose to "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities" (see p. 2.1 of the DEIS/DEIR), MassDOT is limiting the range of alternatives it deems acceptable/practicable to those that enhance regional mobility and support smart growth. On the other hand, the Corps' basic project purpose is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts" (Id.). The Corps' project purpose should, if the analysis is done in an unbiased manner, result in a larger pool of alternatives from which to choose. Nevertheless, PEER believes that the Corps should have ensured that the basic project purpose, the overall project purpose, and the purpose and need should have been the same. Different project purposes, or unclear and poorly defined project purposes, will increase the likelihood of disputes the practicability of alternatives. In this case, the Corps' basic project purpose clearly renders the Rapid Bus a practicable alternative, yet MassDOT has rejected it as impracticable.

L-061.03

**Definition of the South Coast study area is inconsistent, and renders many analyses worthless.** The DEIS/DEIR defines the South Coast study area in several different ways. For example, pages 4.2-4 and 4.2-5 state:

The communities that would be served or that could be impacted by the proposed South Coast Rail alternatives are listed in Table 4.2-1. The alternative railroad or highway alignments pass through or near these 27 communities, and new station sites are within or near each.

L-061.04

Table 4.2-1, labeled “Land Use Study Area Communities” then lists the following communities: Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Canton, Dartmouth, Dighton, Easton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Foxborough, Freetown, Lakeville, Mansfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, North Attleborough, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Sharon, Somerset, Stoughton, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport.

However, the January 28, 2011 memorandum from Scott Peterson of the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) regarding South Coast Rail Work Trips to Boston, which is cited in the DEIS/DEIR states, “The SCR study area consists of 28 communities, which are identified below....” The memo then lists the following towns: Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Bourne, Carver, Dartmouth, Dighton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Mansfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, North Attleborough, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Sharon, Somerset, Stoughton, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport. Therefore, this SCR study area deleted the five towns of Canton, Easton, Foxborough, Sharon, Stoughton, and added the six towns of Bourne, Carver, Marion, Plainville, Seekonk, and Wareham. Since this latter study area was used to determine ridership, it is critical to the analysis contained in the DEIS/DEIR.

The DEIS/DEIR then states, “***No commuter rail service is offered within the South Coast Rail study area.*** The nearest commuter lines (MBTA’s Providence Line and Middleborough Lines) terminate northwest and northeast of the South Coast region” (see p. 4.1-14; emphasis added). This statement is patently false and misleading. In fact, at least four towns defined as being within the SCR study area by Mr. Peterson have ***existing*** commuter rail stations: Attleboro, Lakeville, Mansfield, and Middleborough. Moreover, there are eight ***existing*** commuter rail stations in the South Coast study area as defined by Table 4.2-1 of the DEIS/DEIR: Attleboro, Canton (two stations), Lakeville, Mansfield, Middleborough, Sharon, and Stoughton.

L-061.05

Further, in the Socioeconomics section of the DEIS/DEIR, Table 4.3-1:

lists the communities that would be served or that could be impacted by the proposed project, which includes 17 municipalities in Bristol County and 3 municipalities in Plymouth County. The alternative railroad or highway alignments pass through or near these 20 communities, and new station sites are within or near each. The social and economic conditions within each of these municipalities, relative to the alternative alignments and station sites, are discussed in Section 4.3.2.1.1 (see p. 4.3-2).



Table 4.3-1, labeled “Social and Economic Environment Study Area Communities,” lists the following municipalities: Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton, Easton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Somerset, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport. Again, this list is different than *both* the other lists presented in the DEIS/DEIR.

Yet another definition exists on p. 4.14-3 of the DEIS/DEIR: “The South Coast Rail Study Area is considered to be the region of southeastern Massachusetts consisting of southern Bristol and Plymouth Counties, bordering on Buzzards Bay or Mount Hope Bay, including the cities of Fall River and New Bedford and nearby towns.”

Finally, the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan includes 31 cities and towns; again, different than the other three lists. The Corridor Plan is used to justify MassDOT’s smart growth plan, on which it relies to minimize sprawl that would otherwise be a direct result of this project.

When PEER asked MassDOT to define the “South Coast Region” in its comment letter on the ENF, MassDOT responded that:

...the South Coast Rail study area ...[includes]....all of the communities that would be served by, or could be impacted by, the proposed South Coast Rail alternatives. These are the communities that the proposed railroad or highway alignments pass through or near, and that would be served by proposed stations...[t]he referenced 8,000 riders represent commuters from the region, which includes all of the communities that would be served by the South Coast Rail project (pp. 363-364, Appendix 8.2-A).

The fact that the Corps and MassDOT cannot provide a consistent definition of the South Coast Region, *on which all the analyses are based*, is of grave concern to PEER. As such, we urge the Corps and MassDOT to produce a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR (SDEIS/SDEIR) so that the public is confident that the analyses are correct. The SDEIS/SDEIR must provide a single, consistent definition of the study area, and calculate ridership, impacts, and alternatives based upon this single definition. Moreover, we suggest that the Corps and MassDOT read the DEIS/DEIR and supporting documentation more carefully, to catch these blatantly false statements and eliminate them from the documents. PEER believes that any court would agree that such basic mistakes must be remedied before issuance of a FEIS/FEIR; to do otherwise makes a mockery of the NEPA/MEPA process.

L-061.06

L-061.07

**The ridership analysis is flawed.** The DEIS/DEIR ridership analysis is flawed due to the area from which it obtains the initial Journey to Work (JTW) data, and due to assumptions that are incorrect. The DEIS/DEIR explains its ridership analysis as follows:

L-061.08

Traffic demand estimated for the alternatives are based on ridership forecasts developed by the CTPS. CTPS developed these forecasts based on a number of variables, such as observed commuter rail ridership in similar areas, magnitude of service to be provided, and future estimates of population and employment within the South Coast region and greater Boston area. All of these data were analyzed via a regional travel demand model, which ultimately provided a future ridership estimate for the proposed service (DEIS/DEIR p. 4.1-7).

L-061.08

The DEIS/DEIR also states:

In order to estimate overall transit demand for the region, an optimal transit system with no constraints such as construction costs or environmental impacts would have to be simulated. While this optimal transit demand has not been quantified, demand was measured in terms of the number of daily work-related trips between South Coast communities and Boston. For this screening analysis, transit demand was based on 2000 Journey to-Work (JTW) data. Total service to the South Coast Region was considered the total station boardings as projected for each alternative in addition to boardings at existing commuter bus services, which is anticipated to continue to operate with the South Coast Rail project in place. According to the JTW data, the number of daily work trips from the South Coast region to Boston is approximately 8,000. The ability of the alternative to meet possible future ridership potential was calculated as the percent of met ridership demand (DEIS/DEIR, p. 3-122).

As stated above, the South Coast region is defined throughout the DEIS/DEIR in several different ways. It is not clear which of the various definitions was used to determine that there are 8,000 daily work trips to the Boston area. However, as we stated in our letter on the ENF, the Journey to Work data state that 741 people from New Bedford commute to the Boston area, and 714 commute there from Fall River (see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/commuting/mcdworkerflow.html>). This is a total of 1,455 commuting to Boston and Cambridge from Fall River and New Bedford. What the DEIS/DEIR does *not* mention is that 1,667 people from Fall River commute to New Bedford for work, with another 1,248 commuting to Somerset, and another 1,078 commuting to Swansea (Id.). Similarly, 1,902 people living in New Bedford commute to Fall River, 2,145 to Fairhaven, and 3,761 to Dartmouth (Id.). Therefore, it is worth noting that 11,801 people travel among the cities and towns of Fall River, New Bedford, Somerset, Swansea, Fairhaven and Dartmouth, while only 1,455 travel to Boston. It seems clear that the transportation need is between and among these southern cities, and not to Boston.

L-061.09

PEER also disagrees that the proposed train line will draw people off existing lines to the new trains. MassDOT is assuming that people will, for example, leave train stations in their own towns, and drive miles to a different train station. This is non-sensical, and skews the ridership figures drastically. The map below shows existing train stations (blue markers), the SCR study area as defined in the January 28, 2011 CTPS memorandum, the



This map of Rhode Island displays the locations of various state parks and forests. Major roads are shown in yellow, and towns are labeled in black. Water bodies are in blue. Parks and forests are marked with green pins and labels. Key locations include Wompatuck State Park in the north, Mashpee State Park in the east, and several state forests like Myles Standish and White Island Shores. Other parks shown include Narragansett, Westerly, and several smaller state parks and forests throughout the state.

L-061.10

New system-wide boardings represent the overall draw to the commuter rail transit system due to the South Coast Rail project, which represents an increase in capacity along other commuter rail lines as a particular alternative attracts system-wide new ridership. This total is also used to calculate overall cost-effectiveness of the project.

If we are interpreting this correctly, MassDOT is stating that as riders shift from an existing line to the proposed new line, other riders will take their place on the existing lines. The SDEIS/SDEIR should provide some evidence to support this contention.

L-061.11

There are four ways that potential riders can get to the train station: they can drive, if there is ample parking; they can get dropped off and picked up again in the evening, they can walk or ride their bikes, or they can take some other form of transportation, like feeder buses. It appears that, in some cases, ridership from a particular station is unreasonable given parking availability, or ability to walk to the station. The SDEIS/SDEIR should calculate ridership in two ways: 1) with feeder buses, and projected land use (e.g., TODs), *only if* the costs of those changes are included in the costs of the project; or 2) ridership that would occur using existing land use and available parking. In other words, the DEIS/DEIR should not assume dozens of people or more will be walking to a rural train station with little housing around it.

L-061.12

It is also unclear as to why MassDOT assumes that mass transportation into Boston from Fall River and New Bedford will suddenly translate into jobs for residents of these two economically depressed cities. Page 4.3-15 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

The majority of workers in the South Coast region are employed in blue collar and service jobs such as construction, manufacturing, retail trade, health care/social assistance, and accommodation and food service. A large portion of the population is also employed in educational service jobs, particularly towns with higher median incomes, such as Rochester, Lakeville, and Rehoboth. Workers in the larger South Coast cities, such as Fall River and New Bedford are concentrated in the manufacturing and health care/social assistance sector.

The SDEIS/SDEIR should provide information on the number of manufacturing and health care/social assistance jobs available in Boston for these Fall River and New Bedford workers. This analysis should also explore the pay for these jobs, and whether the cost of the commute would be affordable.

L-061.13

In a recent article entitled *Job accessibility and journey to work: the case of Boston Metropolitan area*, the author states: "...job matching is one of the important factors determining job accessibility since physical proximity to opportunities means nothing if workers nearby are not qualified for the available job opportunities" (See *Job accessibility and journey to work: the case of Boston Metropolitan area*, <http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/33691>, Chung, Jee-seong, MIT, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering., 2005, p. 57). This author also states, "cities and towns around Route 128 contain 20 to 25% of all office space in the Boston metropolitan area. About 35 to 40% of office space is located in downtown Boston with the remainder scattered throughout the metropolitan area" (Id., at 82). The SDEIS/SDEIR must make an attempt to show where the jobs exist, what type of jobs they are, and whether they are appropriate and available for the people in the South Coast study area (whatever than may be). As Chung cautions:



...using conventional methods, job accessibility by transit is determined using the total number of jobs in a zone, assuming that all jobs in a zone can be reached by transit users if the zone can be reached by transit. This assumption leads often to the overestimation of transit job accessibility by over-counting the number of jobs accessible by transit, resulting in the overestimation of transit ridership ....While residents of a neighborhood might be closer to many job opportunities, if they do not have the skills or education to qualify for those jobs, then they are hardly candidates for employment opportunities. Therefore, job accessibility indicators need to incorporate occupational matching (Id. at 87-88).

L-061.13

The MEPA Certificate that issued in 2009 stated:

Many commenters have questioned the need for the project as well as the ridership demand estimate of 8,000 daily work trips for the South Coast region presented in the ENF (which is based on the U.S. Census 2000 Journey to Work data). Some commenters believe the number of trips is underestimated, others believe it to be excessive. EOT should consider the comments from the municipalities, regional planning agencies and others regarding the inputs to the ridership model. I expect the analysis in the DEIR to resolve many of the outstanding questions and provide well documented, valid projections of ridership to support the analysis of impacts and mitigation, and the selection of alternatives (See [http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/ENF\\_Secretary\\_Certificate.pdf](http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/ENF_Secretary_Certificate.pdf)).

L-061.14

The Secretary explicitly asked that the outstanding questions regarding ridership be answered in the DEIR; if anything, more questions have arisen. Moreover, the ridership projections are neither valid nor well-documented.

In conclusion, the ridership figures are severely overestimated. The Corps and MEPA must require a more accurate estimate of ridership in order to fairly assess the various alternatives. Moreover, they must provide occupational matching to demonstrate that the alleged riders will actually have jobs to ride to.

**Travel time, which is used to rate alternatives, is unrealistic.** The DEIS/DEIR states:

Since New Bedford/Fall River commuters currently rely on cars and private bus services, an improved quality of service would provide a comparable or competitive travel time and improved reliability with respect to existing commuter options during peak commuting periods. The average commuting time by car during rush hour is currently 90 minutes. The CTPS travel demand model projects slower commutes as congestion along already slow corridors continues to increase. A future (2030) commute from New Bedford and Fall River to Boston is expected to be approximately 10 to 30 minutes longer than in 2009 (in the peak period) (DEIS/DEIR, p. 3-123).

The DEIS/DEIR then goes on to assign grades to the performance times of the various lines, claiming that the Stoughton electric train would receive a score of 99%, and the

diesel option would receive a score of 88%. In order to determine the travel times, the DEIS/DEIR examined arrival time statistics from 2008 (see p. 3-132), and estimated future travel times. However, MBTA's website has statistics for the percentage of trains on time each month (See [http://www.mbta.com/about\\_the\\_mbta/scorecard/](http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/scorecard/)). MBTA states that Stoughton trains' on-time performance was 82% in Feb. 2011, and 10+ minutes late 13% of the time. The MBTA provides similar performance times throughout previous months and years, all more recent than the 2008 data used in the DEIS/DEIR. These data are readily available, and PEER is puzzled as to why the DEIS/DEIR cites data from 3 years ago rather than using current data. Moreover, if the Stoughton trains are currently more than 10 minutes late 13% of the time now, PEER does not understand how MassDOT can be so certain that the estimated travel times of 76 and 85 minutes for the electric and diesel options, respectively, can be accurate. Travel times for all alternatives should reflect a range of times, using recent data for on-time performance. If 10+ minutes are added to the Stoughton diesel travel time, it would take longer to use the commuter rail than to drive.

L-061.15

Further, p. 3-42 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

Rail travel times for the Attleboro and Stoughton/Whittenton Alternatives, which include dwell times at the stations, were calculated for the 2030 operation and reflect future improvements and service modifications to the rail corridors.

L-061.16

The SDEIS/SDEIR should disclose what these "future improvements" and "service modifications" are, and the associated costs of these improvements. The SDEIS/SDEIR should also disclose the travel times without these future improvements and service modifications.

Finally, PEER would like to see additional information as to why the Rapid Bus suddenly got so much slower in its travel time. MassDOT alluded to future traffic at one of the Task Force meetings as to why the bus is suddenly slower than all the train options, but we believe that the SDEIS/SDEIR should reveal these data. Chung states that, "Travel time is considered to be one of the decisive factors determining people's mode choice" (p. 64). If the travel times in the DEIS/DEIR are not accurate, then neither are the ridership figures.

L-061.17

**Cost.** PEER believes that the costs of the project are highly underestimated. First, we believe there are items missing from the capital cost estimate. By providing a lump sum figure for infrastructure costs, it is impossible to judge whether these costs are accurate. The SDEIS/DEIR should break out the separate costs for track, signals, stations, parking lots, road and intersection improvements, and maintenance facilities. Only with this information can anyone evaluate the accuracy of the cost estimates. An accurate capital cost figure is critical because this figure is used to calculate cost per rider, and to compare alternatives. If the capital cost of the project given in the DEIS/DEIR is inaccurate, then all of the alternatives analyses and comparisons are also inaccurate.

L-061.18



Second, PEER believes that the upgrades to South Station must be taken into account as part of the costs of this project. Although the entire commuter rail system will benefit from the South Station upgrades, they should not be treated as an independent project. Since the proposed South Coast Rail project relies on the South Station upgrade, and since the Commonwealth must somehow find the money to conduct the upgrade, leaving this cost out of the project underestimates the true cost of the South Coast Rail project.

L-061.19

Third, we do not see where the costs associated with the commuter rail maintenance facility are in the cost estimate for the project. Our understanding is that both the maintenance facility and the track leading to this facility must be upgraded in order to support the proposed project, if the project is going to be electrified. Therefore, this cost should be included.

L-061.20

Fourth, pp. 3-60 to 3-62 of the DEIS/DEIR discuss how a feeder bus service to the train stations is “envisioned by MassDOT to connect the urbanized communities in the study area to the South Coast stations.” The DEIS/DEIR goes on to state:

L-061.21

Since the commuter rail system would primarily serve work commuters traveling to downtown Boston, priority would be given to improving access for residents to suburban stations...Feeder bus service would provide a direct connection to significant nearby destinations or origins including downtowns, universities, government centers, hospitals and higher density residential developments...All public transportation systems would reflect and incorporate the South Coast Rail service.

Although the DEIS/DEIR states that “[p]reference would be given to rerouting existing services over providing new services where possible,” there are undoubtedly costs associated with these feeder buses, and for new stations, feeder buses could not simply be rerouted. The SDEIS/SDEIR must include the costs of these feeder buses, bus drivers, fuel, storage and maintenance facilities, and stops into the cost of the project.

Fifth, PEER is concerned that the inflation rate used in the cost figures is inaccurate. Table 3.2-26 on page 3-94 of the DEIS/DEIR states that the cost is in 2009 dollars, and that “[e]scalation was calculated at 3.25% per year per FTA criteria.” PEER believes that construction costs have exceeded standard inflation rate. For example, the costs of concrete, steel, fuel and electricity have increased faster than the inflation rate. Therefore, the escalation rate used by MassDOT is inadequate, and the costs of the project should be altered accordingly.

L-061.22

Sixth, the cost estimates assume that construction on this project will begin approximately one year from now. This is inconceivable. MassDOT should explain how it can possibly believe that engineering will be complete, and all permits will be obtained and the project will be ready for construction in one year. There will likely be legal challenges to the project as well, which would delay any construction. Even if we assume that the cost of the proposed project is \$1.8 billion (which, as we have already explained, is a serious underestimate), the yearly inflation will be astronomical.

L-061.23

Seventh, the costs of wetland mitigation are not included in this project at all. Given the proposed impacts to wetlands, these mitigation costs will likely be high, and must be added to the project. Moreover, if MassDOT continues to claim benefits from the Corridor Plan, it must explain where the money will come from to pay for preservation of Priority protection Areas. Unless MassDOT has a way to pay for this mitigation, it should not assume that it is going to happen.

L-061.24

Finally, and most importantly, there is absolutely no mention of where the money will come from to build this project. Although the Commonwealth and the nation seem to be recovering slowly from the recession, it is completely unclear as to where the Commonwealth will get the billions of dollars necessary to construct this project. Because the source of funding may itself have impacts relevant to the Corps' public interest review (e.g., taxes taken from areas around new municipal stations, gas taxes, etc.), the source of funding must be revealed.

L-061.25

The Secretary, in his issuance of the MEPA certificate in April of 2009, stated:

The Project summary should include a discussion of the project's purpose and need and associated goals and objectives. The project description and assessment of impacts should include construction and operational phases, and address all components of the project alternatives including the rail alignment, stations and layover facilities, substations and other improvements necessary for the construction, maintenance and operation of each alternative and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas. ....As discussed in the ENF, cost is one of the key factors being used by EOT in selection of alternatives. The DEIR should include a detailed analysis of costs, including construction, operation and mitigation costs, for each of the alternatives. EOT is also basing its elimination and selection of alternatives on the basis of smart growth opportunities along the corridor. The DEIR should include an estimated cost per rider based on the results of the ridership analysis for each alternative (see [http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/ENF\\_Secretary\\_Certificate.pdf](http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/ENF_Secretary_Certificate.pdf))

The Corps and MEPA must require that the SDEIS/SDEIR contain a detailed and honest cost estimate of the project that includes the costs of the entire capital expenditure. Moreover, this new estimate must justify the escalation rate, and include realistic inflation rates for construction materials, electricity and fuel. In addition, the construction start date must be more realistic. Finally, the SDEIS/SDEIR must contain mitigation costs. A realistic cost estimate is necessary in order to accurately calculate cost per rider, cost per Vehicle Mile Traveled (VMT) reduction, and for a true comparison of alternatives.

L-061.26

**Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis is inaccurate.** There appear to be many flaws associated with the VMT analysis, which goes to the heart of the alleged greenhouse gas benefits.

L-061.27



First, on p. 4.1-7, the DEIS/DEIR states:

L-061.27

CTPS conducted 2030 Build model runs for each alternative by including the new bus or rail service as a travel option. The model was used to quantify the number of vehicle trips diverted from regional roadways to local roadways because of drivers and riders who change mode from passenger car to transit service. Trip generation for each station was based on projected park-and-ride (i.e., driving & parking at the station) and drop-off (i.e., being dropped off or picked up by another driver) ridership. The analyses of impacts on traffic operations are based on the peak hour park-and-ride and drop-off ridership projections for each station. The park-and-ride ridership was divided by a vehicle occupancy rate (VOR) of 1.05 to calculate the number of park-and-ride vehicles entering and exiting the stations. Two vehicle trips were assumed for each drop-off rider: one entering and one exiting the proposed station.

When someone is dropped off at a station, there are two vehicle trips each *morning*: one dropping the person off, then the vehicle returning home or continuing on somewhere else. This analysis fails to include how the person gets home from the train station at night. It seems to PEER that when someone is dropped off at a train station to go to work, that person also needs to get picked up every evening, resulting in *four* vehicle trips, not two.

**Impacts associated with using the line for freight must be revealed.** The DEIS/DEIR gives conflicting information as to whether freight will be carried on this line, and if so, the impacts of such freight. Page 3-63 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

L-061.28

Freight service on alignments of rail alternatives that would include new track infrastructure or abandoned right-of-way, including Stoughton (beyond existing Stoughton station), Attleboro Bypass and Whittenton alternatives, would be restricted to standard freight size and weight.

The Corridor Plan states:

The South Coast region has a modest freight rail market, and some businesses do rely on freight service. EOT is developing a statewide freight rail plan that identifies opportunities for future freight service in the corridor. In general, this region is not expected to experience significant growth in freight for a variety of reasons. The South Coast Rail planning process has been coordinated with the state freight process and the commuter rail project will be designed in a way so as not to preclude future freight opportunities should they arise. Any future freight service would, of course, be required to undergo separate environmental review and permitting.

Finally, p. 373 of Appendix 8, comment N-025-035 states:

Expansion of freight service is not currently planned for the Stoughton line segment between Stoughton and Taunton. Any future freight service on the MBTA's right-of-way would be required to undergo MEPA review and to address potential effects on public water supplies.

The SDEIS/SDEIR must reveal whether freight is going to use the line, and if so, the frequency, types of freight, and impacts. Merely stating that future freight service would have to undergo MEPA review is totally inadequate for purposes of this analysis. But for the proposed new line, freight could not run through this location. If freight is anticipated as reasonably foreseeable activity, the impacts must be revealed in order to assess cumulative impacts to the resources, including public drinking water.

L-061.29

**The impacts associated with MassDOT's preferred alternative are severely understated.** The DEIS/DEIR is disingenuous at best about the impacts associated with its preferred alternative. Page 3-145 of the DEIS/DEIR states that the alternatives are compared "based on five adverse environmental impacts:" 1) The amount of permanent wetland loss (in acres) and wetland loss in ACECs; 2) The number of acres of protected open space that would be directly impacted, acres of land acquisition and municipal tax loss; 3) The number of acres of protected public water supply lands (active and inactive Mapped Wellhead Zone 1) that would be directly impacted; 4) The amount of noise impacts; and 5) The number of acres of mapped Priority Habitat (state-listed rare species) that would be lost (edge and interior habitat). As PEER and other groups have been saying for years, MassDOT must look beyond the direct impacts. PEER cannot count the number of times that we cautioned that even if direct impacts are low, indirect impacts may be astronomical.

L-061.30

In fact, MassDOT's own Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis, buried in the Appendices, illustrates this nicely. On page 7 of the CAPS analysis, it states:

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Overall the two routes through the Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity...

As we have been saying since the beginning, the fragmentation impacts of the Hockomock Swamp are extremely high. So, although the alleged direct impacts associated with the Stoughton Alternative appear lower than some of the other alternatives, this does not mean that the Stoughton Alternative is the LEDPA.

PEER also believes that the DEIS/DEIR downplays the effects of clearing a 40 to 100 foot swath through the Hockomock canopy. Page 4.14-60 of the DEIS/DEIR cites a 1993 study, stating that:

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Where the proposed rail will require the clearing of a corridor through a forested area, the potential increase in ambient light levels in the understory canopy will be reduced by the shape and orientation of the clearing. The relatively narrow canopy gap and its north-south orientation will limit the potential increase in



ambient light within the understory area. Accordingly, the impacts associated with the clearing are considerably less than would be expected in most clear cut/forest edge conditions and would be more similar to a north-facing exposed cut. The study found no significant edge microclimate effects in northern facing cuts. The impact analysis conservatively assumes that increased light, wind and temperature are likely to occur within 30 feet of the cleared edge of the right-of-way, based on the research cited above. The most likely potential effect of this physical change would be to increase the growth rates of the shrubs currently growing in this zone, resulting in a more dense shrub layer along the edge. Increased drying of the leaf litter, if this effect occurred, may affect recruitment of shrub and herbaceous species by affecting seed germination and seedling establishment. The anticipated effect would be that the existing sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*) currently found along the edges of the railbed in wetland areas would respond with enhanced growth and fill the edge gap. These species have responded in this way to increased light along the edges of the Hockomock Swamp created by Route 138, and in the Assonet Cedar Swamp along the edges of the New Bedford Main Line...The temporary nature of the alteration reduces the potential impacts associated with the proposed corridor clearing. An increase in sunlight adjacent to the rail corridor will result in an increase in adventitious limb growth and increased development of the shrub layer. "Closed edges" as defined by Matlack are edges of older clear-cuts where adventitious limbs and shrub growth have closed or partially closed the gaps created by clear-cuts. Once this gap in the canopy is closed, measurable differences in light, temperature, humidity, vapor pressure density and soil moisture are no longer observed.

First, PEER strongly disagrees with the characterization that a 40 to 100 foot cut through the center of the Hockomock Swamp, and then construction of an active rail line, is "temporary in nature." Second, PEER was under the impression that the canopy would not be allowed to close; rather, that the vegetation had to be kept clear of the rail line, particularly if it were electric. The SDEIS/SDEIR should clarify what the Commonwealth plans to do with regard to the vegetative growth next to the line. If indeed the canopy is allowed to grow back, the SDEIS/SDEIR should disclose how long this will take to reach pre-construction conditions, if ever.

L-061.33

PEER would also like to direct MassDOT and the Corps to read the article *Overview of Transportation Impacts on Wildlife Movement and Populations* (see Jackson, S.D. 2000. *Overview of Transportation Impacts on Wildlife Movement and Populations*. Pp. 7-20 In Messmer, T.A. and B. West, (eds) *Wildlife and Highways: Seeking Solutions to an Ecological and Socio-economic Dilemma*. The Wildlife Society). In particular, we would like to draw your attention to page 3, which states, "As long linear features on the landscape, railways, roads and highways have impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat that are disproportionate to the area of land that they occupy" (see also *Effect of rail on wildlife*, <http://www.wildlandscpr.org/node/221>). PEER is disturbed that the DEIS/DEIR cites to one study that is almost 20 years old to support the Commonwealth's contention

L-061.34

that the impacts through the Hockomock will be minimal. This is certainly contrary to using the best science available, and misleading to the reader.

L-061.34

The DEIS/DEIR is also misleading in other places. For example, Page 4.14-100 states:

The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives would reduce connectivity in the Hockomock Swamp with a gradient ranging from major impacts close to the rail line to negligible impacts at greater distances, compared to the existing connectedness (Figure 4.14-27). Without a trestle (Figure 4.14-28), these alternatives would result in substantial losses in connectivity in the Hockomock Swamp east of the rail line, between the Raynham dog track and Foundry Street and between the rail line and Route 138, and in some areas west of the rail line. ***Moderate impacts would extend through much of the Hockomock, including areas east of Route 138. These impacts would be substantially reduced by the trestle (Figure 4.14-29), with major losses restricted to a smaller area east of the rail line and north of the dog track. Impacts would also extend over a smaller area than the “no-trestle” option*** (emphasis added).

L-061.35

However, when you examine Figure 4.14-29 (see below), you can see that contrary to the description in the DEIS/DEIR, the loss of connectedness is major east of the rail line, not moderate. The SDEIS/SDEIR should include the figures next to the text, and describe them accurately.

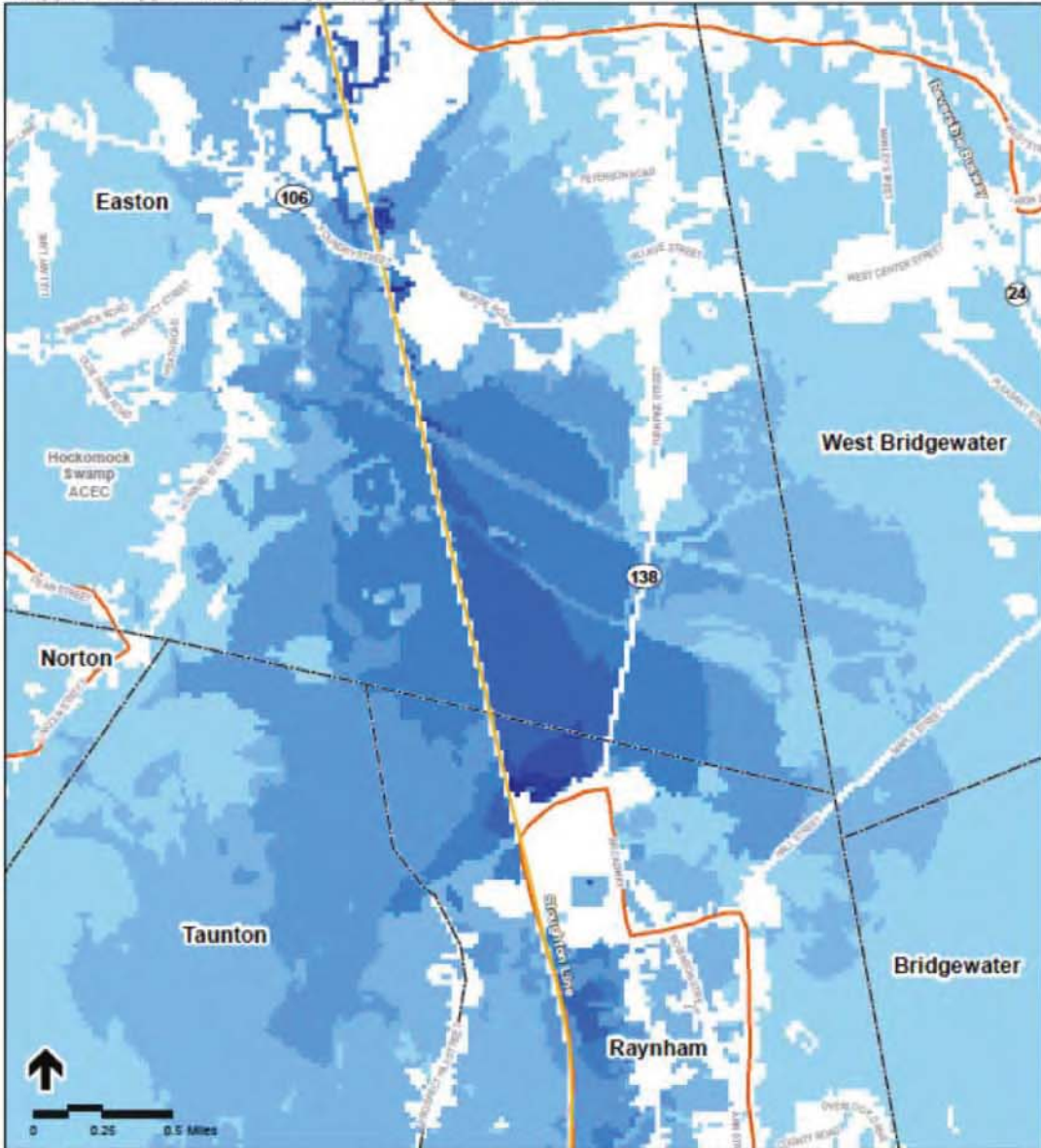
Page 1-35 of DEIS/DEIR states that:

Losses of wetland habitat are similar for the Rapid Bus and Attleboro Alternatives (20.3 to 21.5 acres), and they would result in the largest impacts to vernal pool wetland habitat (2.3 to 5.4 acres). The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives would have less wetland loss (10.3 to 11.9 acres), and the least impacts to vernal pool wetland habitat (1.0 to 1.8 acres).

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However, again, MassDOT misrepresents the true impacts by not taking into account the 55+ acres of supporting vernal pool upland habitat that would be lost (see Table 4.14-28). The SDEIS/SDEIR should present direct and indirect impacts together, in order to allow the reader to properly assess the true impacts associated with each alternative.





- Legend**
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Loss of Connectedness | Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) |
| Major                 | Town Boundaries                               |
| Moderate              | Proposed Alternative                          |
| Negligible            |   |

Figure 4.14-29

Change in Connectedness  
 for the Hockomock Swamp  
 (with trestle)

Another example of where the DEIS/DEIR is disingenuous is on page 4.15-47, which states:

Reconstruction of the track of the former Stoughton line would result in habitat loss which *could* lead to habitat fragmentation and loss of genetic diversity. However, the loss of a small percentage of habitat is not considered significant given the large area of suitable habitat for these species in, and in the vicinity of, the project area (emphasis added).

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The qualifiers used in statements such as these appear to be an attempt to minimize the known impacts of the preferred alternative. As stated above, the CAPS analysis found that the Stoughton routes would result in the “greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity” of all the alternatives. Stating things like habitat fragmentation “could” result, but is not considered significant makes a mockery of ecology and wildlife biology.

The DEIS/DEIR also downplays water quality impacts. Page 4.14-61 states, “[t]he rail or highway alternatives are not anticipated to generate non-point source discharges of pollutants to surface waters, and therefore are not considered to have an adverse impact on aquatic communities.” However, page 4.17-34 states, “Most potential rail contaminants are due to the train traffic on the rails, which may result in hazardous contamination from spills, drips, or exhaust.” PEER has provided its water quality analysis of vernal pools along an active rail line compared to the vernal pools in the Hockomock several times. This analysis demonstrates that non-point source discharges from rail lines do, in fact, significantly affect water quality of vernal pools. A bald statement that the impacts do not occur is not sufficient to make scientific studies disappear. The SDEIS/SDEIR must investigate fully the impacts of rail on the water quality of vernal pools and other waters.

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Page 4.14-84 of the DEIS states that the canopy gap for the length of the trestle will be 40', but later on that same page it says the canopy gap will be 40 - 80' for a single track, including through some Atlantic White Cedar swamp, and 60 - 100' for a double track. Specifically, it states:

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Removing the forest canopy on the railbed within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC study area could potentially alter the physical conditions (light, wind, temperature) in adjacent forested areas. No adverse effects are anticipated to herbaceous or shrub-dominated communities, since there would be no change in the light, wind or temperature regimes. The canopy gap is anticipated to be approximately 40 feet in width for the length of the trestle, and the resulting forest edges will face east and west.....Reconstructing the railroad track system through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC will increase the width of the canopy gap over the railbed to between 40 and 80 feet wide in areas with single track (through the Hockomock and Pine Swamps) and between 60 and 100 feet wide in areas with double track (north of North Easton station and a segment south of the trestle near Raynham Place station), and will require the removal of existing vegetation on the elevated railbed. This linear gap, extending through natural communities,



which include Atlantic white cedar swamp and red maple swamp, may allow invasive exotic plant species to colonize the railbed or areas adjacent to the railbed.

Again, the impacts to the Hockomock should be clear and unambiguous, and this includes a specific width of clearing. Moreover, statements such as “No adverse effects are anticipated...” are unscientific, counterintuitive, and indicate a clear bias. These statements should be removed from this supposedly factual document.

L-061.40

**The trestle through the Hockomock is a bridge, and cannot be built without substantially more impacts than what is revealed in the DEIS/DEIR.** The MBTA defines a bridge as "any structure with total bridge length (sum of all spans) greater than 20 feet"

([http://www.mbtta.com/uploadedfiles/Documents/Schedules\\_and\\_Maps/Commuter\\_Rail/FINAL%20031009\\_Vol1Sec3\\_Bridges\\_March-2009.pdf](http://www.mbtta.com/uploadedfiles/Documents/Schedules_and_Maps/Commuter_Rail/FINAL%20031009_Vol1Sec3_Bridges_March-2009.pdf)). The trestle, is therefore a bridge. In fact, Page 3-74 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

By far the largest new bridge would be the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp with about 284 spans. It would be about 8500 feet long and 24 feet wide at the level of the bridge deck, with a minimum 3 feet clearance above grade and incidental excavations to allow large mammal passage. Figure 3.2-19 shows the typical cross section of the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp.

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Page 3.2 of the MBTA document shows a diagram of a "one track of two rails" of 56.2' for *each* rail track, yet the figures in the DEIS/DEIR show the single track trestle through the Hockomock as either 20' (Figure 3.2-19) or 28' (figure 4.15-9) wide. MassDOT should explain how MBTA design standards for bridges require 56.2', yet the bridge structure through the Hockomock will only be 20' to 28'. The SDEIS/SDEIR must include a design of the trestle, based on an actual survey, to adequately depict impacts to the Hockomock Swamp. The not to scale drawings included in the DEIS/DEIR are completely inadequate.

PEER also does not understand how the proposed trestle through the Hockomock could be built and/or maintained without a much wider right-of-way, or without access roads leading into the wetland. The DEIS/DEIR describes the construction sequence but does not discuss how the heavy equipment will get into the swamp, how it will operate within the right-of-way, and how this trestle will be maintained once it is built. It is inconceivable that the trestle would not require some kind of access to it, and the impacts associated with this access must be disclosed.

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The DEIS/DEIR also does not appear to disclose the width of the right-of-way through the Hockomock or in other locations. PEER contacted Kristina Egan of MassDOT, and was told that the right-of-way through the Hockomock was 60'. That information should be included in the SDEIS/SDEIR, and a survey should be done to ensure that the right-of-way is consistent in width throughout the area. According to the DEIS/DEIR, the width of the right-of-way varies: page 3-102 states, "The construction method would be kept

L-061.43

consistent throughout the corridor, even in sections where the right-of-way and embankment widens.” However, the specific width, varying or not, is nowhere to be found in the DEIS/DEIR.

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**Article 97 issues are not adequately discussed in the DEIS/DEIR.** It is clear that the preferred route for the rail line would invoke Article 97. Pages 4.10-26 to 4.10-27 state:

The estimated area of protected open space and publicly owned parcels in the ACEC required for constructing the Stoughton Electric Alternative north of the Southern Triangle is listed in Table 4.10-9 and shown in Figures 4.10-7a-e. This area would be used for the widened right-of-way necessary for the railroad improvements or construction, and for a traction power facility... The two entries for Easton in Table 4.10-9 represent one 0.94-acre parcel, for a traction power facility. The site is entirely within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC. One of these parcels is designated for conservation purposes, and would therefore be considered Article 97 land subject to the provisions of the EEA’s Article 97 Land Disposition Policy.

According to the EEA Policy, Article 97 land disposition cannot occur unless “exceptional circumstances” exist. In order for a determination of “exceptional circumstances” to be made, the following conditions, among others, must be met: 1) no feasible and substantially equivalent alternatives exist and 2) The disposition of the subject parcel and its proposed use do not destroy or threaten a unique or significant resource. MassDOT claims that because the area proposed to be converted “represents a very small proportion of the overall protected area,” no unique or significant resources would be threatened (see page 4.10-60). PEER disagrees. Article 97 should be taken very seriously, and public land should not be given away lightly. Table 4.2-9 of the DEIS/DEIR shows 2.57 acres of public land being taken, in a total of 8 parcels. PEER believes that construction of the rail through the Hockomock would involve even more public land being taken from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW). We do not believe that the trestle can be constructed within the confines of the right-of-way; nor do we believe that the trestle can be maintained without additional impacts to DFW land. AS such, we believe that the SDEIS/SDEIR should more accurately reflect both the amount and the impact of such takings, and the likelihood that the legislature would approve such a taking, given the enormous cost of this project.

L-061.44

**Implementation of the Corridor Plan is highly speculative and will cost additional monies that are not disclosed.** Page 4.3-24 of the DEIS/DEIR states that the Corridor Plan provides “an opportunity to organize new growth around stations and direct it away from sensitive areas of ecological value.” Unfortunately, the DEIS/DEIR does not disclose either the source of funding or the legal mechanisms to accomplish this. In fact, pages 4.3-56 and 57 concede that, “Implementation of Smart Growth measures, as proposed by MassDOT, is subject to local decision making and may thus vary among communities targeted for Smart Growth...” Despite this uncertainty, the DEIS/DEIR proceeds to assume that “conservatively established smart growth goals would be achieved by the Build Year and development would be distributed accordingly. Actual

L-061.45



development with the implementation of Smart Growth measures may vary from this both on local and regional, aggregated basis. The impact analysis assumed a full implementation and realization of development according to the Smart Growth Plan, so that its impacts could be assessed relative to those without Smart Growth measures.”

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Page 3-144 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

As stated in the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan, commuter rail service to the South Coast will generate nearly \$500 million in new economic activity every year. This is new growth by the year 2030 that would not occur without the new infrastructure. The rail connection is projected to create between 3,500 and 3,800 net new jobs within the Commonwealth by 2030—about two-thirds of which would locate in the South Coast region with the remaining third in Boston Cambridge and other communities outside the region. The Corridor Plan would be implemented by MassDOT throughout the 31-community region regardless of which alternative was selected, so there would be no substantive difference among alternatives with regard to the majority of smart growth benefits. These benefits include protecting the Priority Preservation Areas, and concentrating development in the Priority Development Areas. The principal differences among the alternatives would be with regard to their ability to promote concentrated development (transit-oriented development) at station areas. Transit-oriented development (or redevelopment), as illustrated by the concepts included in the Corridor Plan report, would include mixed high-density residential, retail, and commercial/office development at certain station locations. The benefits of this transit-oriented development would be to increase local tax revenues; decrease vehicle miles traveled, and decrease Greenhouse Gas emissions. As outlined in the Corridor Plan, transit oriented development would be likely as new development or re-development at the Downtown Taunton, Taunton, Freetown, Fall River Depot, King’s Highway, Whale’s Tooth, Easton Village, and Raynham Place stations.

Even the Secretary’s 2009 MEPA certificate requested additional information:

The DEIR should include an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project for each alternative, to fully understand the overall costs and rationale for selection of alternatives. The DEIR should address how the proposed rail and/or bus routes, and associated Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan will be financed.

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It is unrealistic – not to mention deceitful - to assume that these Smart Growth measures will be implemented. The SDEIS/SDEIR must remove these assumptions in all of its analyses unless and until both a funding mechanism and legal mechanisms are developed and assured.

**The mitigation discussion is wholly inadequate.** As we stated above, mitigation costs are not taken into account in the costs of this project. However, the mitigation

L-061.47

discussion, such as it is, is flawed in other ways as well. Specifically, the mitigation does not comply with the requests in the 2009 MEPA certificate. The Secretary stated:

The DEIR should also include a comprehensive mitigation plan for any unavoidable impacts, explain why these impacts are unavoidable, and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent feasible. The mitigation plan should address permanent and temporary impacts and construction-related impacts...EOT should consult with MassDEP to discuss any concerns regarding proposed wetlands mitigation sites and to discuss appropriate protective measures and mitigation for vernal pools....The DEIR should describe proposed wetlands mitigation areas and identify locations on maps and site plans. As noted in the MassDEP comment letter, there is flexibility within the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. The DEIR should describe how mitigation sites will be designed to preserve critical functions such as flood storage volume at each locality. The DEIR should discuss ownership of the sites and identify any proposed to be taken by eminent domain. The DEIR should provide details on any replication proposed including the timeframe anticipated and the methods proposed to achieve successful replication. The DEIR should include a monitoring and contingency plan to ensure success of mitigation. The ENF indicates that EOT will rely on compensatory wetland mitigation areas referenced in the 2002 New Bedford Fall River Commuter Rail FEIR, which identified more than 50 acres of compensatory wetlands. The DEIR should use the FEIR Certificate as a starting point for developing wetlands mitigation commitments, as recommended by MassDEP, and should specifically identify the proposed mitigation measures and ratios associated with each of the resource areas.

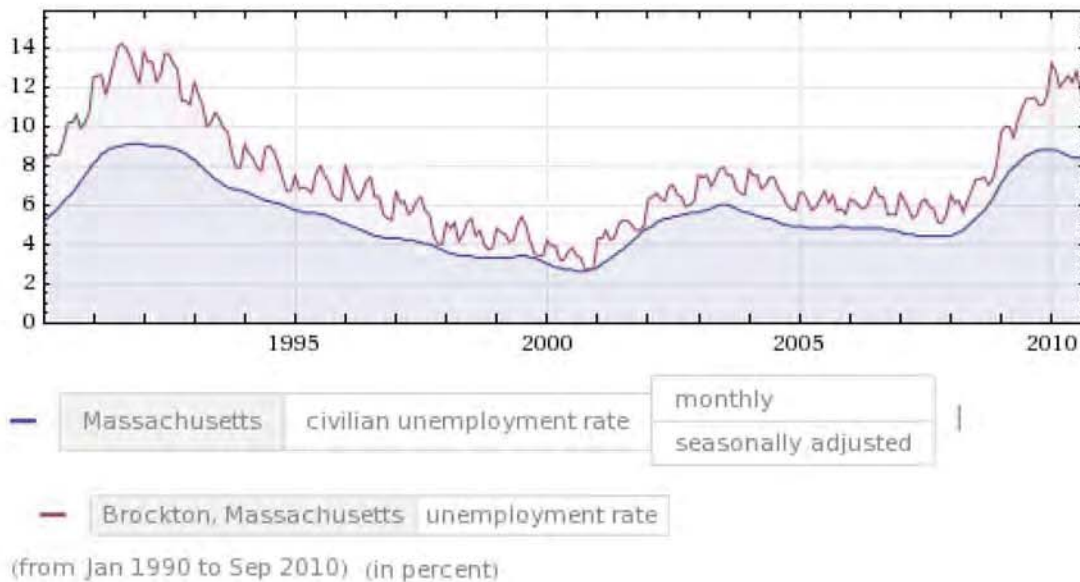
L-061.47

The DEIS/DEIR did not contain maps, locations of mitigation sites, or costs associated with mitigation. Did MassDOT confer with MassDEP as requested? If so, that information should be provided in the SDEIS/SDEIR. The discussion of mitigation in the DEIS/DEIR was so minimal, PEER is unclear how MassDOT even proposes to mitigate for the massive impacts proposed, and how it will pay for such mitigation. All of this information is necessary for the resource agencies to make an informed decision on permitting.

**Alleged economic benefits of the proposed train are unsubstantiated.** The DEIS/DEIR claims that the proposed project will bring all sorts of wonderful economic benefits to the South Coast region (whatever that may be), and help the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. These claims are stated baldly, with no substantiation. Moreover, a quick review of other depressed cities, and their unemployment rates before and after the commuter rail arrived in their towns, does not show miraculous economic recoveries. For example, the City of Brockton got the commuter rail in 1997. As you can see from the graph below, Brockton's unemployment rate tracks that of the state of Massachusetts, and does not appear to change with the advent of the rail.

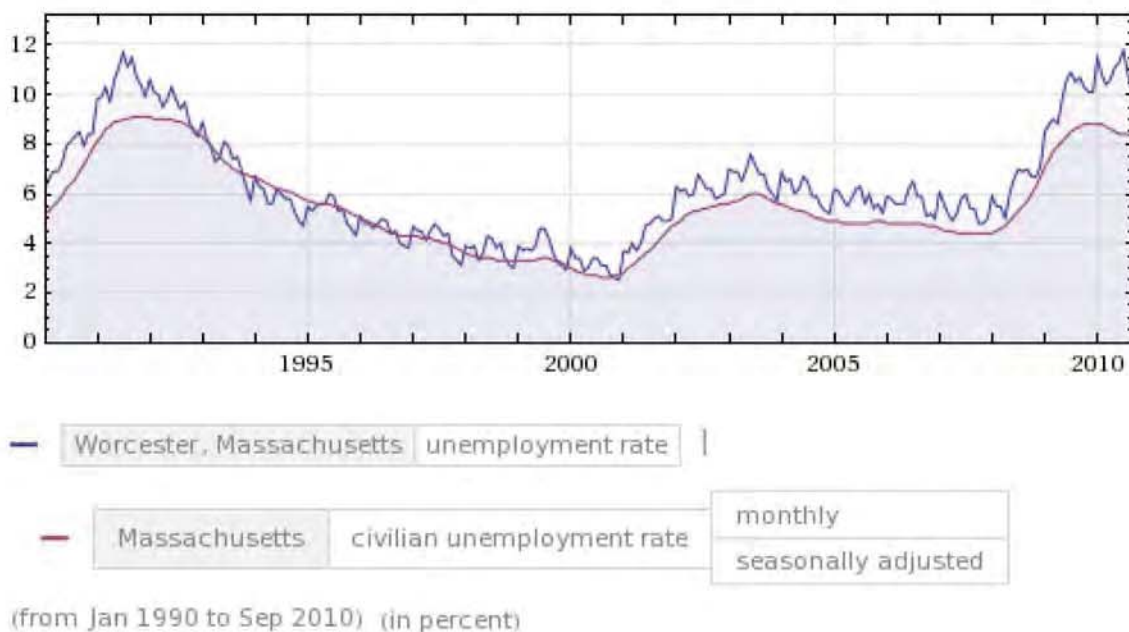
L-061.48





Similarly, Worcester got the commuter rail in 1994. The same trends exist: the unemployment rate tracks that of the state.

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Rather than assuming that the commuter rail will bring economic growth and employment to these cities, MassDOT must give us hard evidence that this will happen. The SDEIS/SDEIR should provide analyses of unemployment, education, job skills, language skills, etc., to determine the precise reasons for their economic woes. Simply claiming that the train is the silver bullet is not sufficient to warrant an expenditure of billions of dollars, and allow the destruction of such valuable natural resources.

**The Rapid Bus is the LEDPA.** It is abundantly clear to PEER that the Rapid Bus is the LEDPA. Although the ridership analysis and cost analysis are seriously flawed, it is apparent that the Rapid Bus has the least amount of impacts (zero loss of ecological integrity units, according to the CAPS analysis), is much cheaper, and will accomplish the basic project purpose. The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.3-67, “The South Coast Rail Rapid Bus alternative will improve accessibility and mobility in the South Coast region, which in turn will stimulate additional economic activity in the region.” Even if the Stoughton alternative were to be declared the LEDPA, it would cause or contribute to significant degradation of waters of the United States, and thus be unpermissible.

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**Other errata and items that must be addressed in a SDEIS/SDEIR:** There are numerous other errata and unaddressed issues in the DEIS/DEIR which should be addressed in a Supplemental document. These include, but are not limited to:

L-061.50

- The analysis of climate change on page 3-142 does not take into account induced traffic.
- In the land use chapter (pages 4.2-1 to 4.2-2), all discussion of noise receptors are human-related. There should be additional mention of the effects of noise on wildlife, interference with breeding calls, etc.
- The blue-spotted salamander population in the Hockomock is likely the pure, diploid population, which is very rare throughout New England. The Commonwealth should investigate this matter, and increase protection of the population if indeed it is the diploid one.
- Figure 3.2-6 shows that there is a section of privately owned track in Raynham. The SDEIS/SDEIR should disclose how this track will be obtained, and costs of obtaining this track must be disclosed and added to costs of the project.
- Page 4.3-6 uses property tax rates from 2005, showing, for example, that the property tax rate in Easton was \$7.45/\$1,000 Assessed Value. However, in Table 4.3-9 on p. 4.3-19, the DEIS/DEIR says the Easton 2005 tax rate is 10.69. The SDEIS/SDEIR should use consistent, and preferably correct, figures. Moreover, it should use up-to-date figures; the 2012 tax rates are already available for most towns and cities.
- Figure 4.2-5c, Tile 2 has a category for “undeveloped” land and “forest,” yet the undeveloped land is mostly forested. This must be clarified;
- Page 4.3-22 discuss the “permanent impacts” of the proposed project, stating, “The potential long-term social and economic effects of the South Coast Rail alternatives include loss of property tax revenue for municipalities from the acquired privately owned parcels, displacement of existing businesses, residential displacement, fragmentation of neighborhoods or loss of continuity between neighborhoods and job creation related to the operation of the new service.” This section should include noise impacts, quality of life, water quality, drinking water, and safety issues.
- Table 4.2-2 on page 4.2-6, states that 40.8% of Easton is "developable." It also states that, "For purposes of this analysis, developable land is defined as large parcels of land that could be developed into new subdivisions or new commercial/industrial properties or could be placed into permanent or limited

L-061.51

L-061.52

L-061.53

L-061.54

L-061.55

L-061.56

L-061.57



- open space protection." It is unlikely that this amount of land in Easton is indeed developable. The SDEIS/SDEIR should check this and other numbers, and disclose how these percentages were obtained. L-061.57
- Figure 4.15-9 shows a trestle through "Hancock Swamp." Please clarify where this swamp is. L-061.58
  - Page 4.3-25 states, "Projections were also made for the four Rhode Island communities that are expected to have commuters utilizing the potential new transit service. Please clarify whether these riders are included in the ridership analysis, and/or the parking availability analysis. L-061.59
  - The DEIS/DEIR states that the trestle will be 1.6 miles in length (page 4.10-26), while Appendix 8 says 1.8 miles (page 377, comment N-025-048). Pick one and stick with it. L-061.60

**Conclusion.** Given the short amount of time to review this massive document, together with its many errors and shortcomings, PEER is positive that we did not cover all the ground we should have. However, it is abundantly clear that a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR needs to be done, with an adequate amount of time given for its review. We are also absolutely sure that the Stoughton Alternative is not the LEDPA, and even if it were, it is not permissible. We urge the Corps and MEPA to do their duties and require adequate and truthful information before they make a determination on this project. L-061.61

Sincerely,

Kyla Bennett, Ph.D., J.D.  
 Director, New England PEER  
 P.O. Box 574  
 North Easton, MA 02356  
 508-230-9933  
 nepeer@peer.org





**From:** Anacheka-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:11 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: South Coast Rail review (UNCLASSIFIED)  
**Importance:** High  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

**From:** Carolyn LaMarre [mailto:director@savethetaunton.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 04, 2011 2:09 PM  
**To:** Anacheka-nasemann, Alan R NAE; timmermann.timothy@epa.gov  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail review  
**Importance:** High

Dear Alan and Tim,

Taunton River Watershed Alliance is a citizen volunteer membership organization dedicated to preserving the watershed through which the South Coast Rail project is proposed. The review of the DEIS/DEIR will be done me and volunteer reviewers. I am currently only working part time due to budget constraints and the volunteers will work on the review after their normal work hours. It is unlikely, given these time constraints, that TRWA will be able to adequately review the documents. In fact, I think it will be difficult for anyone to do so in less than 60 days.

Therefore, I am requesting that the review period be extended further to an additional 60 days. I believe that other NGOs will have a similar difficulty meeting the May 27<sup>th</sup> deadline for review and meaningful comments also.

E-008.01

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Carolyn LaMarre, Executive Director  
Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1116  
1298 Cohannet Street  
Taunton, MA 02780**

**508-828-1101**

[director@savethetaunton.org](mailto:director@savethetaunton.org)

**TRWA is a citizen, volunteer organization. Please visit our website to learn how we protect, preserve, and restore our watershed. Join our efforts by becoming a member at [www.savethetaunton.org](http://www.savethetaunton.org). You can make a difference!**

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



May 27, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
Regulatory Division  
ATTN: CENAE-R-PEA  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental  
Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office, Aisling O'Shea  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Via Email: [SCREIS@usace.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@usace.army.mil) and [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

**Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report for South Coast Rail  
NAE-2007-00698 and EOEEA #14346**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

On behalf of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc. (TRWA), I submit the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/R) for the South Coast Rail Project. TRWA is an Alliance of concerned residents, businesses, and organizations united to restore and properly manage water and related natural resources within the Taunton River Watershed.

MassDOT has identified the "Stoughton corridors" as its "preferred alternative" to provide public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston. These alternatives would involve reconstruction of the abandoned railbed that cuts through the Hockomock Swamp in Easton and Raynham. Protection of the Hockomock Swamp is a high priority for TRWA. The Hockomock Swamp is the largest freshwater wetland in Massachusetts and the headwaters of the Taunton River. It supports a variety of natural communities including Atlantic White Cedar Swamp and provides habitat for many species of wildlife, including at least 13 species listed by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) as endangered, threatened and special concern. Maintaining the integrity and functions of large wetland and habitat areas is especially critical to provide flood storage capacity and opportunities for migration of natural communities and wildlife in the light of the anticipated impacts of climate change that include more intense rainstorms, increased floodwaters, temperature change



and sea level rise. The Stoughton diesel and electric alternatives would also cross the Pine Swamp in Raynham.

The DEIS/R fails to provide an adequate assessment of the impacts of the project to wetlands, streams, rare species and biodiversity, especially in the Hockomock and Pine Swamps and detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts. This information is necessary to identify the “least environmentally damaging practicable alternative” as required under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act and to determine compliance with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWSA), Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and other applicable statutes and regulations. We respectfully request the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and the Army Corps of Engineers to require preparation of a Supplemental DEIS/R (SDEIS/R) to provide this information.

L-071.01

Significant impacts to ecosystems and wetland resources that would result from construction of the Stoughton diesel or electric alternatives (identified in the DEIS/R) include:

- Nearly 12 acres of wetlands alteration;
- Loss of approximately 32.6 acres of rare species habitat, with impacts to nine state-listed species;
- Alteration of 1.77 acres of vernal pool and of 55 acres of support upland adjacent to vernal pools;
- Relocation of approximately ½ mile of a perennial stream that runs along the existing railbed north of the Raynham Dog Track; and
- Fragmentation of habitat in the Hockomock and Pine Swamps, disruption of 19,500 feet of migratory route by the “barrier effect” and a high degree of loss of “ecological integrity (EI).” Ecological integrity is defined as “the ability of areas to support plants and animals and the natural processes necessary to sustain them over the long term.” The EI loss was predicted under the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis, developed by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate information regarding these and other impacts. Examples of missing information include:

- Plans showing field delineations of all wetland resource boundaries, streams and the footprint of all work. This information is needed to determine whether the predicted wetland losses associated with the Stoughton alternatives are accurate;
- Soil analysis for the portion of the right-of-way (ROW) in the Hockomock Swamp where the proposed trestle will be constructed to demonstrate ability of the soil to support the footings of the trestle;
- Information on how access to rail lines for maintenance and emergencies will be provided in sensitive areas where single tracking is proposed and especially for the trestle area;
- A plan showing the proposed relocated channel of the perennial stream that currently flows on the ROW in the Hockomock Swamp, and clarification of whether the relocation will involve alteration of existing wetlands;

L-071.02

L-071.03

L-071.04

L-071.05

The DEIS/R also fails to provide detailed mitigation plans that were specifically required in the MEPA Certificate on the Environmental Notification Form for this project. These requirements included:

**Wetlands** (page 27 ff of MEPA Certificate): *The DEIR should include a detailed description of measures to avoid and minimize wetland impacts for each of the alternatives. The DEIR should also include a comprehensive mitigation plan for any unavoidable impacts, explain why these impacts are unavoidable, and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent feasible. The mitigation plan should address permanent and temporary impacts and construction-related impacts...The DEIR should describe proposed wetlands mitigation areas and identify locations on maps and site plans. As noted in the MassDEP comment letter, there is flexibility within the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. The DEIR should describe how mitigation sites will be designed to preserve critical local functions such as flood storage volume at each locality. The DEIR should discuss ownership of the sites and identify any proposed to be taken by eminent domain or where work is proposed on Article 97 property. The DEIR should provide details on any replication proposed including the timeframe anticipated and the methods proposed to achieve successful replication. The DEIR should include a monitoring and contingency plan to ensure success of mitigation.*

L-071.06

**Rare species** (page 24): *The DEIR should include a detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for each species.*

L-071.07

**Biodiversity** (page 29): *The DEIR should describe measures proposed to avoid and minimize impacts, and include a detailed mitigation plan to address biodiversity impacts. The plan should include an estimate of mitigation costs such as funding for land acquisition, ecological assessment and monitoring programs, wildlife crossings, and other biodiversity conservation efforts. The DEIR should describe in quantitative and qualitative terms the extent to which the mitigation proposed will support biodiversity conservation and reduce or compensate for project-related impacts.*

L-071.08

Despite these specific requirements, the DEIS/R does not provide detailed mitigation plans for wetlands impacts or for impacts to rare species and biodiversity. These plans should be provided in a SDEIS/R.

L-071.09

For the reasons described above, we request that you require preparation of a SDEIS/R. If you decide not to require a SDEIS/R, we request that all of the information identified above be provided in the Final DEIS/R. Thank you for considering these comments.

L-071.10

Sincerely,

Carolyn LaMarre  
Executive Director



Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.  
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Taunton, MA 02780  
508-828-1101  
[director@savethetaunton.org](mailto:director@savethetaunton.org)

cc: Kristina Egan, Project Manager, DOT  
DFG Commissioner Mary Griffin  
DEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell  
DCR Commissioner Edward Lambert  
Jon Regosin, NHESP



The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts  
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[nature.org/massachusetts](http://nature.org/massachusetts)

May 26, 2011

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District**

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Senior Project Manager  
Regulatory Division, Permits and Enforcement Branch  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
[SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)

**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

**Re: Department of the Army Permit Application Number NAE-2007-00698  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs EEA No. 14346**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a global non-profit conservation organization working to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Nature Conservancy focuses its efforts strategically in locations that are most critical to biodiversity, and which have the greatest potential to provide viable habitat over the long term. In partnership with municipal, state and federal agencies and other conservation groups, TNC has protected over 20,000 acres of wildlife habitat in Massachusetts, and more than 117 million acres worldwide. We are pleased to have worked collaboratively with both the Commonwealth and the Army Corps of Engineers on a number of important conservation initiatives.

For your consideration, TNC offers the following comments on the EIR / EIS for the South Coast Rail:

The Nature Conservancy is generally supportive of public transportation enhancements, recognizing they can play an important role in reducing vehicle miles traveled and associated environmental impacts. TNC has no objection to restoration of mass transit service from Boston to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford, provided potential impacts are comprehensively analyzed, and appropriate strategies are implemented to maximize positive impacts and avoid, minimize and mitigate negative impacts. This project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological integrity, as well as important habitat for multiple state-listed species. L-063.01

In their 2009 report included in Appendix 4-14-A, *Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) South Coast Rail Analysis*, Compton et al. concluded, "overall the two routes through Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity. The trestle alternatives through Hockomock Swamp reduced the modeled loss of ecological integrity somewhat, although many of the benefits of a trestle are likely to occur at a local scale below that of the CAPS analysis." Landscape scale L-063.02

fragmentation, as well as other indirect impacts such as changes in canopy cover, toxins, water quality, microclimate alterations, etc., caused by construction, operation and maintenance of rail through Hockomock Swamp is unlikely to be compensated for by the trestle. Further documentation and quantification of these impacts, and discussion of the likelihood of success of mitigation for such impacts, is needed. In contrast, the rapid bus alternative would have *no impact* on IEI--no loss of ecological integrity at landscape scale, and it is the least damaging to the function of the aquatic ecosystem.

L-063.02

Direct impacts to priority habitat and wetlands associated with the rapid bus alternative involve higher acreage, but the ecological integrity of these areas adjacent to existing highway infrastructure is already impaired. The combination of direct and indirect impacts of the Stoughton alternatives must be considered in this context. Further, the proposed future construction of transit-oriented development at the Raynham Place station would introduce additional direct and indirect impacts to the integrity of Hockomock Swamp. "Undevelopment" and restoration of all or part of the former dog track site should be considered as compensatory mitigation for other unavoidable impacts.

L-063.03

L-063.04

L-063.05

It is clear from the analysis that Attleboro is not practicable due to constraints on construction and operation. However, we request that the rapid bus be retained as an alternative for further review in determination of the LEDPA, as it appears to meet the overall project purpose, "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility". Furthermore, the analysis indicates it is constructable and it is the least-cost alternative.

L-063.06

Regardless of the alternative selected, substantial mitigation will be required. Poorly planned development constitutes one of the primary causes of wildlife habitat loss and fragmentation in Massachusetts. Improvements in transportation infrastructure generally stimulate new residential and commercial development, and this growth can be expected to occur well beyond the vicinity of new rail or bus stations and existing urban centers. The Commonwealth's stated goal to build this project in a way that is consistent with smart growth principles is commendable. Implementation of the Corridor Plan is critical, including acquisition of lands with high IEI that can provide long term net benefits to rare species and working with towns to adopt smart growth practices. If the project stimulates scattered, low-density development, intended benefits in traffic reduction and air quality improvements may be offset. We appreciate the thoroughness of the analysis of this topic provided in the document.

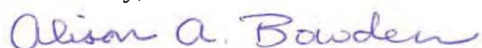
L-063.07

The MEPA Certificate on the ENF for this project specifically required detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for impacts to rare species, wetlands, and biodiversity and wildlife. These detailed plans are not provided and should be included in an SDEIS/R or FEIS/R. It is unclear if mitigation costs are intended to be included as a "contingency" in cost estimates provided. An SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs and an explanation of how the project, Corridor Plan, and all compensatory mitigation will be financed.

L-063.08

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. The Nature Conservancy looks forward to continued work with the Commonwealth and the Army Corps of Engineers as planning and review of this project proceeds. Please contact me with any questions at 617-532-8360 or [abowden@tnc.org](mailto:abowden@tnc.org).

Sincerely,



Alison A. Bowden  
Freshwater Program Director





Strategy | Human Capital | Branding | Communications

May 10, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

**RE: South Coast Rail Project**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I write to you in support of extending rail service to the South Coast region.

The introduction of commuter rail to the South Coast will enable access to employment opportunities near Route 128 and downtown Boston. Our region has been battered by adverse economic conditions, and the implementation of full-scale, reliable commuter rail service is a critical step toward sustained economic recovery.

L-024.01

To make the service viable for commuters, a minimum of three trains in both the morning and afternoon peak periods should be utilized. A late evening train service to Boston should also be considered to allow for additional riders. Weekend service would help support the area's tourism economy, which continues to grow.

L-024.02

Since at least the 1980's, those seeking higher office, including our current and previous Governors, have made promises of support for commuter rail service between Boston and New Bedford. Instead, over the last several decades, commuter rail extensions have been provided to more economically advantaged regions of the Commonwealth.

It is time to make good on the promise, and to provide full-service rail as a means to improve opportunities for those in this region. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

John A. Theriault  
Principal



# THE UNITED REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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SEEKONK  
WRENTHAM

May 23, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

Re: South Coast Rail Project  
DEIS/DEIR

Via: Email Only

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

Please be advised that I am submitting this comment letter on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) of February 2011, regarding the South Coast Rail Project (SCRIP), on behalf of the United Regional Chamber of Commerce (URCC) as its duly authorized representative.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has done an excellent job of thoroughly analyzing and evaluating the remaining alternatives based upon all of the factors involved. As a result of the DEIS/DEIR findings, one must logically and correctly conclude as follows:

### 1. Enhanced Bus Alternative

This would be an investment in the enhancement of the existing regional transportation network, but would not fulfill the project purpose and need to reactivate commuter rail service between Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Boston. However, it could be a welcome supplement in the short term.

L-083.01



2. Rapid Bus Alternative

This would require a significant and substantial investment to realize the contemplated further enhancement of the existing regional transportation network through the construction of additional highway infrastructure, rapid bus stations, and rapid bus layover facilities. However, it would still be subject to the limitations of the existing highway infrastructure, traffic and congestion, and resulting travel delays. In spite of the significant investment, it still would not fulfill the project purpose and need to reactivate commuter rail service between Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Boston. Although it could be a further supplement in the long run, the cost of development appears not to be justifiable.

L-083.02

3. Attleboro Alternative

This is the least practicable commuter rail alternative based upon cost, construction and operation. In addition, with consideration to the significant impact upon otherwise not impacted wetlands, it certainly does not meet the critical test of being the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). Therefore, because of its impracticability and infeasibility, this alternative should be deleted from any further review or consideration by either the ACOE or the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MDOT).

L-083.03

4. Whittenton Alternative

This alternative is an unnecessary detour from the Stoughton Alternative, which I shall discuss next and last. It would create an extremely adverse impact on the City of Taunton with its multiple downtown grade crossings. Public Safety and economic development would suffer greatly, and people would become the endangered species. Operational issues would be more complex and costly, travel times would increase, and ridership would decrease. Therefore, this alternative does not pass the LEDPA test, and should be deleted from any further review and consideration by the ACOE and the MDOT.

L-083.04

5. Stoughton Alternative

This is the most practicable commuter rail alternative based upon all factors considered, and it fulfills the project purpose and need of restoring commuter rail service between Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Boston. It is practicable, feasible and least environmentally damaging, and therefore passes the LEDPA test with flying colors. This alternative was utilized for commuter and freight rail service from the mid 1800's to the mid 1900's. It was discontinued because of the

L-083.05



Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Re: South Coast Rail Project  
Page 3

development of the interstate highway system during the Eisenhower Administration. America abandoned the rails and headed for the highways. However, this alternative can work again and it is the only one to accomplish the project mission. Our New England Yankee ancestors applied their proven wisdom of common sense and practicality, and we need to do the same. The MDOT has already designated Stoughton as their preferred alternative. Therefore, this is the one alternative that should be pursued by the ACOE and the MDOT for further review and consideration, and ultimately for development and operation.

L-083.05

Based upon the foregoing, I look forward to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/ Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and the ACOE's determination of the LEDPA for which a permit may be issued.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments for due consideration and inclusion in the FEIS/FEIR.

UNITED REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



George I. Spatcher, Jr.  
Member and Representative to the  
Commuter Rail Task Force

cc: Kristina Egan  
Director, South Coast Rail  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4150  
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[Kristina.Egan@state.ma.us](mailto:Kristina.Egan@state.ma.us)

Stephen C. Smith, Executive Director  
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Economic Development District  
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walkBoston

May 25, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
Attn: MEPA Office, Aisling O'Shea

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

RE: EEA No. 14346

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

WalkBoston appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report. This important project is one that could positively impact the mobility of a great many residents of the southern sub-region of the Commonwealth.

In terms of advocating for pedestrian service, we are concerned about certain analyses in the proposal and hope there are explanations for the actions based on them. Because of our concern, we request that certain points be given further attention during any follow-on permitting and planning work on the project. These are:

1. A safe walking environment. Construction of any of the options in this report will result in a need for pedestrian improvements. Differing locations call for distinct approaches to pedestrian safety. Depending on the location, improvements may include new sidewalks to complete or connect to a network, signal-timing changes at intersections to allow more time for pedestrian crossings, passively activated crossing signs at pedestrian crossings, crosswalk striping, and pedestrian count-down signals. The proposed improvements included in this report appear to be a first cut. We assume that more measures for pedestrian safety will be needed and are to be added at a later date. It would be very helpful if these proposals were outlined.
2. Traffic calming elements are planned for streets in the Town of Easton in association with one of the alternatives. We would like to know how traffic calming suggestions were approached and handled in other communities, and what local responses may have been to such suggestions. Were traffic calming ideas fully explored in relation to each station?
3. Each alternative displaces the use of a specific right of way by pedestrians for recreation purposes. We trust that there has been study to ascertain the importance of recreational (and possibly commuting) access in communities where the commuter rail will eliminate such use. This could be particularly important in communities that do not have alternatives for recreational opportunities. We wonder if unused rail corridors that are not to become part of a future commuter rail system can be candidates for permanent trails?

L-095.01

L-095.02

L-095.03

L-095.04

4. There is some confusion about walking distances to stations. A distinction has been made between a 5 minute walking distance (usually a 0.25 mile distance) and a 0.5-mile perimeter around proposed stations. See, for example, Figs. 4.4-8 to 4.4-25 and 4.2-8 to 4.2-34 and 4.10-10 to 4.10-32. Why are there differences in the analyses of radius determination and what impact does it have on pedestrian access? L-095.05
5. The proposed Battleship Cove Station in Fall River does not seem to be as detailed as other proposals (Figure 4.5-54). Because of its location adjacent to the marine museum and downtown, this location seems to be potentially important for tourism, for access to downtown Fall River and for commuter traffic. Yet it appears to be relegated to part-time use. What is the explanation for this approach? L-095.06
6. Fall River access issues need immediate attention irrespective of the process of bringing new rail or bus access to the South Coast sub-region. We are particularly concerned about data that show that environmental justice communities in Fall River are already significantly disadvantaged. The analysis shows that all proposed alternatives would improve access to jobs for Fall River residents by more than 100% and would improve access to hospitals for Fall River residents by up to 400% (Fig. 4.4-51). No other community in the south coast study region has such a large deficiency of access. In the event that the South Coast project does not move forward, are there any opportunities for ameliorating this situation? L-095.07

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this project. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman  
Executive Director

Robert Sloane  
Senior Planner

Cc MassDOT Secretary Jeffrey Mullan  
Kristina Egan, Director of South Coast Rail





Secretary Richard Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Division  
Attn: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, EEA No. 14346  
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Boston, MA 02114  
VIA: FedEx # 7971 3509 0269 and Email to aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
VIA FedEx # 7947 9540 6300 and Email to SCREIS@usace.army.mil

**RE: South Coast Rail Project**  
**Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft Environmental Impact Report**  
**(EEA File #14346; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698)**

May 25, 2011

Dear Secretary Sullivan and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

Weaver's Cove Energy (WCE) has reviewed the above-referenced South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) noticed in the Environmental Monitor. The attached comments are being timely filed prior to the May 27, 2011 close of the public comment period. We look forward to seeing responses to these comments incorporated into either a supplemental draft environmental impact report / supplemental draft environmental impact statement or a final environmental impact report / final environmental impact statement.

L-047.01

Sincerely,

Mario Tavolieri  
Pipeline Project Manager

c.c. Ted Gehrig, President & COO, Weaver's Cove Energy LLC  
Gregg Landes, Vice President – Planning & Development, Weaver's Cove Energy LLC  
Leon Bowdoin, Vice President – Operations, Weaver's Cove Energy LLC  
Kristina Egan, Director, South Coast Rail, Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4150, Boston, MA 02116-3973  
VIA FedEx # 7947 9543 9080 and Email to Kristina.Egan@state.ma.us

Comments of Weaver's Cove Energy on South Coast Rail Project  
DEIR- EEA File #14346 DEIR - USACE Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698

**Comment 1.**

The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.18-26 that the use of the Weaver's Cove Energy's (WCE) West Layover Facility Site: "...for layover is consistent with Designated Port Area (DPA) temporary uses and would not effect the Mount Hope Bay DPA." This interpretation is at odds with the definition of "Temporary Uses" as defined in 310 CMR 9.02. 310 CMR 9.02 states:

L-047.02

*"Temporary Use means warehousing, trucking, parking, and other industrial and transportation uses which occupy vacant space or facilities in a Designated Port Area, for a maximum term of ten years as specified in 310 CMR 9.15(1)(d), and without significant structural alteration of such space or facilities."*

Building the WCE's West Layover Facility Site overnight yard is inconsistent with 310 CMR 9.02 because it involves "significant structural alteration" that is intended to remain in place for well in excess of 10 years. The DEIS/DEIR should explicitly address this inconsistency. The DEIS/DEIR should explain why building a rail yard and support facilities on the site is not a "significant alteration of such space or facilities".

**Comment 2.**

In addition to not meeting the definition of a temporary use, 3.10.CMR 9.02 also states:

*"Temporary uses may be licensed only if marketing efforts have failed to identify any prospective water-dependent industrial tenant, and if the license is conditioned to require further solicitation of such tenancy upon expiration of the license term."*

L-047.03

The DEIS/DEIR documents no such solicitation. Logic suggests that WCE itself would respond to such a solicitation because it has been developing a water dependant use on the site for close to a decade. The DEIS/DEIR should document the planned solicitation process and WCE should be included in the solicitation.

**Comment 3.**

310 CMR 9.15(1) (d) 1. states:

*"...in Designated Port Areas, the term of license for any non-water-dependent use in a marine industrial park shall not exceed 65 years; the term of license for any supporting DPA use shall not exceed 30 years; and the term of license for any temporary use shall not exceed ten years".*

L-047.04

The DEIS/DEIR should explicitly document the term of the license. If a variance has been granted, the DEIS/DEIR should document the process by which the variance was obtained and explain the legal justification for such a variance. If a variance will be sought, the basis on which the Project meets the variance requirements should be documented in the DEIS/DEIR. If the license period is for only 10 years, as required under 310 CMR 9.15(1) (d) 1, then the DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the economic and environmental impacts of relocating the overnight yard in 10 years time should any water dependant use surface when the required solicitation is issued at the expiration of the 10 year license.

**Comment 4.**

The DEIS/DEIR incorrectly states that WCE will not locate any facilities on the WCE East Layover site. The DEIS/DEIR should reflect the facts shared by WCE with Christina Egan and other members of the South Coast Rail project development team in meetings, e-mails and letters. The technical aspects of WCE's LNG development are extensively documented on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Website under docket CP04-36. Also see [www.weaverscove.com](http://www.weaverscove.com). WCE notified South Coast rail both verbally and via written correspondence that the Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project has received a FERC certification to site an interstate natural gas pipeline on the East Layover Site in the

L-047.05

precise location where the Massachusetts's Department of Transportation (MDOT) is currently proposing the overnight layover facility.

L-047.05

The South Coast Rail project development team has been made aware, and the DEIS/DEIR should reflect the fact that Weaver's Cove Energy will need access to construct the pipeline in the designated and FERC approved pipeline right of way.

WCE has also notified South Coast rail both verbally and via written correspondence that the Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project has received a FERC certification to site facilities in the precise location where MDOT is currently proposing the West layover facilities.

**Comment 5.**

The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the implications if any of constructing a layover yard over a 24" inch diameter high pressure interstate natural gas pipeline. Pipelines routinely cross under railroad tracks to get from one side to the other, but routing them along the axis of the track is a unique approach. South Coast Rail needs to address in the DEIS/DEIR the implications and risks of siting active rail lines over a long and continuous run of high pressure interstate pipeline.

L-047.06

**Comment 6.**

As documented in the permitting documents available on the FERC website in Docket CP4-036, the proposed rail layover yard would be sited on a wetland mitigation area for the Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project. The DEIS/DEIR should address the impact of the proposed layover yard on the wetland mitigation plans that are documented in WCE's FERC and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit filings. Pertinent materials were sent by Weaver's Cove Energy to the South Coast Rail project team several months before the DEIS/DEIR was issued.

L-047.07

**Comment 7.**

WCE's FERC and USACE permitting documents clearly show how the site will be used for laydown, staging and construction. WCE has communicated these facts to MDOT and South Coast rail in written and verbal communications. The DEIS/DEIR should show how the construction and operation of the overnight yard is compatible with the above uses of the property by WCE.

L-047.08

**Comment 8.**

Both the proposed WCE's East and West Layover facilities would be constructed on property that currently accommodates remediation equipment which is owned and operated by a previous landowner under an agreement with WCE. Access to contaminated areas of the site is required to remediate the site under Massachusetts Contingency Plan process. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the impacts of the proposed layover site on the remediation process and explicitly address whether or not the placement of the layover yard on the site will have an impact on the cost of conducting the remediation. If the placement of the facility will result in incremental mitigation costs, the DEIS/DEIR should clearly explain which entity will be responsible for paying these incremental costs. The incremental costs should also be factored into the economic analysis which should be added as part of the layover site selection report which is included in Appendix 3.2-E of the DEIS/DEIR. (NOTE: several of the comments below address this appendix and discuss how the cost of the siting the layover yard should be incorporated into the study).

L-047.09

**Comment 9.**

301 CMR 9.02 which states:

*"Supporting DPA Use means an industrial or commercial use in a Designated Port Area that provides water-dependent industrial use in the DPA with direct economic or operational support, to an extent that adequately compensates for the reduced amount of tidelands on the project site that will be available for water-dependent industrial use during the term of the license. The type, location, scale, duration, operation, and other*

L-047.10

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*relevant aspects of the industrial or commercial use must be compatible with activities characteristic of a working waterfront and its backlands, in order to preserve in the long run the predominantly industrial character of the DPA and its viability for maritime development. In determining whether an industrial or commercial use qualifies as a Supporting DPA Use, the Department shall act in accordance with the following provisions as well as all applicable provisions of a DPA Master Plan.*

L-047.10

*In the case of commercial uses, any use may be determined to be compatible with the DPA except where the inherent nature of the use gives rise to severe conflict with port operations or excessive consumption of port space, either directly or indirectly (e.g. as a result of collateral development activity). Accordingly, new or expanded uses that shall not be determined to be a Supporting DPA Use include, but are not limited to, transient group quarters such as hotels/motels, nursing homes, and hospitals; recreational boating facilities; amusement parks and other major entertainment or sports complexes; and new buildings devoted predominantly to office use. Conversely, uses that shall be presumed compatible with the DPA are small business uses that are adaptable to the upper floors of existing buildings, to minor infill parcels, and to other interstitial spaces not likely (in their own right or in combination with other nearby spaces) to be of primary importance in attracting maritime development to the DPA. Typical of such uses are storefront retail and service facilities; shops operated by self-employed trade persons; eating and drinking establishments with limited seating; and small-scale administrative offices....."*

The DEIS/DEIR should quantify and document how siting the layover yard within a DPA will provide "direct operational or economic support" to that DPA. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the effect of the no build alternative on the DPA (meaning the layover yard is built, but it is built outside the boundaries of the DPA).

**Comment 10.**

Page 5-61 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

*"residential property values would increase by 5 to 25 percent within one mile of new station sites and decrease by up to 20% within 400 feet of the alignments and layover facilities."*

L-047.11

The DEIS/DEIR should provide reference to the study or studies that support the determination that property values would decline by the stated percentages at the one mile and 400 foot distances. The DEIS/DEIR should explain and reconcile how the prescribed distances relate to the site specific view shed because it is these site specific view sheds between neighboring landowners and the proposed rail facilities that drive the economic impacts – in addition to noise, vibration, traffic, and air quality impacts.

**Comment 11.**

The DEIR/DEIS lists the potential wetlands impacts for a number of rail line route alternatives. The DEIS/DEIR should quantify the acreage of impacted wetland resources associated with the various "overnight" and "mid-day" facility alternatives and how these impacts would be mitigated. Wetland areas should be mapped and a description of the quality of the wetland should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should include a single table that lists the individual wetland impacts by location and the total acreage of wetland impacts. As currently written, the wetland impacts are scattered throughout the DEIS/DEIR making it difficult to understand the various individual and cumulative impacts. Wetland areas impacted are currently based on crude GIS data instead of site specific surveys of wetland areas. GIS data is not generally based on ground surveys but instead relies of aerial photography. It is also often dated and can therefore be unreliable and inaccurate. The DEIS/DEIR should be based upon new (current) site specific wetland survey data. MADOT should conduct surveys of wetland areas along each route, at each station, and at overnight and day layover yards.

L-047.12

**Comment 12.**

Much like wetland impacts being scattered throughout the DEIS/DEIR, there are other important statistics that should be organized in such a way that readers of the DEIS/DEIR can easily understand the total impacts. Total impact tables should be included for all the other key impacts including, but not limited to, real estate taxes foregone, acreage of properties taken (by category), tons of air emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOC, etc) from all the sources, etc. L-047.13

**Comment 13.**

The project needs to show compliance with Federal Conformity standards. This generally requires an estimate of operational and construction air impacts over the life of the project. The DEIS/DEIR should include these estimates as well as the details of how they have been determined. L-047.14

**Comment 14.**

The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate how short listing each of the five overnight yard alternative locations would support or detract from the development of the Regional Smart Growth Plan being championed by MDOT under MEPA. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss how the ranking of the alternative overnight yard locations would change if Smart Growth planning is or is not considered in the selection process. L-047.15

**Comment 15.**

The DEIS/DEIR should identify which of the overnight and midday yard alternative locations discussed in Appendix 3.2-E (Layover Facility Alternatives Analysis) are located in "Priority Development Areas" listed in the "Corridor Plan" that is discussed in P.3.1 on page p-5 of the DIES/DEIR. L-047.16

**Comment 16.**

Each overnight yard alternative occupies more land area than a typical train station, thus logic suggests that the potential impacts from overnight yard siting would be as significant if not more significant than impacts emanating from a typical train station site. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the potential impacts associated with the siting, permitting, construction and operation of each overnight and midday yard locations. L-047.17

1. The DIES/DEIR should evaluate the impact of noise generating activities that will occur at night when ambient noise levels are low and people are likely to be sleeping with their windows open. The noise analysis should be expanded to consider the impact of noise generated when trains enter or leave the overnight yard. In particular, the noise analysis should evaluate the noise associated with trains accelerating out of the yard and decelerating into the yard (e.g., brakes squeaking). The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the noise impacts associated with train wheels squealing as they navigate the curved switches within the yard. The DEIS/DEIR should quantify how loud the noise from this activity will be once it reaches the closest sensitive receptor in the vicinity of each overnight yard site studied in Appendix 3.2-E. L-047.18
2. The DEIS/DEIR should include a site specific traffic analysis for each of the overnight yard locations listed in Appendix 3.2-E. Impacts to the traffic conditions on roads surrounding each rail yard site should be evaluated. This work should be based upon completion of site specific traffic count studies. The impact of the incremental traffic generated by the project can then be studied using appropriate and approved traffic models. Intersections that might suffer excessive degradation in service should be documented and where appropriate mitigation to restore acceptable service should be documented in the DEIS/DEIR and included as a project activity, including its costs, environmental and operating impact on the public during design, construction and operation. L-047.19
3. The DEIS/DEIR should describe whether or not traffic signals and sidewalk work will be required for some or all of the proposed overnight yard and midday yard locations. L-047.20

4. The DEIS/DEIR should include an analysis of visual impacts associated with the lighting at night for each of the sites considered in Appendix 3.2-E. The analysis should consider the impact on abutting property owners as well as viewshed impacts from nearby locations including historical cultural sites. The analysis should describe site specific proposed lighting plans and mitigation plans for each of the alternatives. L-047.21

**Comment 17.**

The Weaver's Cove West overnight yard site is a brownfield site that is contaminated with Light Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (LNAPL) floating on the water table. Due to this contamination, the parcel has had its use restricted through a deed restriction imposed by a prior owner of the site. The DEIS/DEIR should address how MDOT intends to address this legal restriction and how such measures would impact the site's attractiveness relative to other alternatives identified in Appendix 3.2-E. L-047.22

**Comment 18.**

Title searches should be completed for all alternative overnight yard sites to determine if there are additional deed restrictions, other than the one identified in Comment 17, that need to be considered. This title work needs to be completed to understand whether or not the proposed configuration of the Project is viable. L-047.23

**Comment 19.**

The DEIS/DEIR should identify a preferred location for the overnight yard locations. Failing to identify a preferred alternative suggests that Mass DOT may be attempting to segment review of the project by studying the overnight yard locations separately from the rail and bus line routes and the station locations. L-047.24

**Comment 20.**

The DEIS/DEIR fails to identify even a single midday yard location. The DEIS/DEIR should include full assessments of specific midday yard alternatives because they are essential elements of the project. The potential locations of midday yards should be listed and a preferred location identified in the DEIS/DEIR along with a description of the proposed facilities so the abutting and nearby landowners are provided the same opportunity to comment as landowners near the other proposed facilities associated with the Project. The Project should be reviewed as a whole in the DEIS/DEIR – not segmented as is the case of the current draft the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.25

**Comment 21.**

Page P-9 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

*"Because the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS/DEIR have substantially different levels of environmental impacts (which are of necessity only estimates at this design stage) and would impact environmental resources in different locations, it is not practical to provide a fully detailed mitigation plan for each alternative and resource at this stage of the project development..... The EOEEA has agreed that this is the appropriate level of information ... and has waived the requirements to include detailed wetland mitigation plans in this document."* L-047.26

Under what regulatory authority was this decision made and who within Executive Office Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) authorized the decision? The DEIS/DEIR should document the legal basis under which EOEEA waived the requirements to include details on wetland mitigation. In order not to segment the review of the project, the amount and type of mitigation should be documented in the DEIS/DEIR. The feasibility of implementing the required level of mitigation should also be discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. While the precise listing of each mitigation site may not be required, at least a set of possibilities should be provided in the DEIS/DEIR with a few preferred mitigation sites identified.



**Comment 22.**

The DEIS/DEIR should explain how a preferred layover alternative can be selected if the environmental impacts studied and evaluated to generate the current short list were neither detailed nor specific. The DEIS/DEIR should specifically document the legal basis under which the project can be developed and alternative layover sites identified without collecting current site specific data. [GIS layer data is typically used as a crude screening tool. The DEIS/DEIR should include ground level surveys that confirm the accuracy of the GIS data. Wetlands need to be identified and located by ground survey teams. Elevation contours need to be determined and estimates of cut and fill completed. Title searches need to be conducted to identify land use restrictions. The level and type of contamination and ongoing remediation techniques need to be defined – with remediation equipment located on drawings of the site.]

L-047.27

**Comment 23.**

The Secretary's Certificate and USACE decision should document and affirm that the selected overnight yard locations are the "Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternatives". The initial screen used to assess the viability of overnight yard locations was not based on sufficient data to support a position by either agency. Crude qualitative evaluations need to be replaced with studies of a quantitative nature. The capital cost differences between the sites should be compared to the operating cost differences between the sites.

L-047.28

**Comment 24.**

The DEIS/DEIR should report at what point in the review process will the USACE and/or the Secretary select the preferred overnight yard locations. Will the public be afforded an opportunity to comment on this selection before the review process under MEPA and NEPA are completed and before the rail line options are narrowed down?

L-047.29

**Comment 25.**

The DEIS/DEIR should include a copy of the notifications sent to abutters and nearby residents of the overnight yard locations to demonstrate that input from interested parties was, and is, being solicited. The rail yards are significant facilities and landowners near them should be notified. Landowners near the track rights of way are most likely aware that train traffic may increase on those lines as a result of the project without any special notification effort. However, it is very unlikely that a landowner near the track would anticipate the construction of a rail yard near or adjacent to their property. As part of the "Civic Engagement" process discussed in the DEIS/DEIR, an effort should be made to reach out to nearby landowners. Landowners within 1500 feet of any proposed layover yard location or those with a direct view of the yard if that distance is farther, should be notified in writing via mail that specific sites near or adjacent to their property are being considered for overnight yard locations.

L-047.30

**Comment 26.**

The DEIS simply assumes that the overnight yard locations for trains should be at the terminus of the lines (away from Boston) in order to avoid "deadheading" trains for the morning commute. Since no mid-day layover facilities have been selected, (not a single potential location is listed in the DEIS/DEIR), consideration should given to relocating the overnight yard locations so a single storage yard location can serve both overnight and mid-day storage of trains for both the Fall River and New Bedford line. The DEIS/DEIR *concluded* that the overnight yards are best located in Fall River and New Bedford by *assuming* that sufficient mid-day storage facilities will be in place at a location near Boston. In some parts of the DEIS/DEIR, it is reported that the midday facilities will be addressed at a future date. In other parts of the DEIS/DEIR it is assumed that mid-day train storage facilities will be provided by the MBTA and that the development of these yards is outside the scope of the current Project being reviewed.

L-047.31

If new train storage capacity is needed, the DEIS/DEIR should address the impacts of all of the required storage facilities. It is insufficient for MA DOT to simply conclude that the needed mid-day storage will be made available by others on a timely basis. If another agency is going to provide the needed services, such as the MBTA, then the locations of that spare capacity should be documented in the DEIS along with written correspondence from the MBTA documenting its commitment to making that capacity

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available to the South Coast Rail project. The DEIS/DEIR will be deficient if South Coast rail and MDOT are allowed to simply state that unknown and unnamed existing or planned storage facilities will be utilized. The DEIS/DEIR should specifically address the environmental impacts of utilizing specific existing or planned storage facilities. The development of mid-day storage facilities required to operate the project should be included in the scope of the DEIS/DEIR environmental review.

L-047.31

**Comment 27.**

A discussion of mitigation associated with the numerous train stations is included in the body of the DEIS/DEIR. A discussion of the site specific mitigation required by the development of the overnight and mid-day train storage facilities should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. See Table 4.1-87.

L-047.32

**Comment 28.**

The total acres of property required to site the overnight rail yard seem to vary drastically by site. To site the overnight yard on the WCE West Site, the DEIS/DEIR reports that 57.91 acres would be required and all of Weaver's Cove's land west of the railroad tracks would be acquired by the project. To site the overnight yard on the WCE East site, MDOT reports that only 17.99 acres of the approximately 20 acre parcel owned by Weaver's Cove east of the rail line is required. To site the overnight yard on the ISP site a total a 43.57 acres would have to be acquired by MDOT.

L-047.33

The DEIS/DEIR should include drawings that show how much land is needed to site the facility (permanent use of the land), and how much land is needed to support the construction of the facility (temporary use of the land). Drawings for each of the overnight yards considered (a dozen or more) should clearly show the entire outline of the property line of the parcel being impacted and properly lines of the neighboring parcels, wetlands located, the grading of that area of the overnight yard shown, the areas needing to be cut/filled to achieve the appropriate grading for a rail yard, a quantitative estimate of cut and fill volumes, and a listing of the total acreage of each parcel hosting south coast rail facilities and the acreage taken. Drawings of the layover facilities in Appendix 3.2-E and in the body of the DEIS/DEIR should clearly document the total acreage of each tax parcel effected by the proposed siting of a layover yard, the portion of the parcel being taken by the project should be recorded on the drawing and shaded and the acreage of the portion of the parcel that will remain with the current owner should be recorded and shaded on the drawing.

**Comment 29.**

Two of the overnight yard options require taking roughly 50 acres of land (WCE West and ISP) and the other (WCE East) requires roughly 17 acres. The DEIS/DEIR should explain how and why the land taking requirements at each site differ so drastically. If the smaller Weaver's Cove East site really is viable site at 17 acres, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why the project must take the full 57.91 acres of the Weaver's Cove West site in order to site the layover yard West of the tracks.

L-047.34

**Comment 30.**

All of the sites in the current short list for the Fall River layover yard are contaminated. Many of the additional alternatives listed in the Appendix are also contaminated. Simply relying on generic statements that do not address the details of the site specific nature of the contamination does not provide to the public the information on which they need to comment.

L-047.35

The DEIS/DEIR should explain how the presence of historical environmental contamination will effect the development of each of the overnight yard locations listed in the DEIS/DEIR as well as in Appendix 3.2-E. The nature of the contamination should be described and the ongoing or planned methods to remediate the sites should be described. The impact of the construction and operation of the rail yard on each remediation method should be discussed. The approximate incremental cost of building on a brownfield site should be documented. The party responsible for doing the remediation work should be identified. If siting an overnight yard on the site will increase remediation costs, the DEIS/DEIR should identify who will be responsible for paying these incremental costs. The DEIS/DEIR should include this type of analysis

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and explanation for each of the layover yards discussed in the layover yard site selection document in Appendix 3.2-E. L-047.35

**Comment 31.**

While the above comment addresses only the layover yards, the same comments apply to proposed station locations. Additional site analysis should be completed for all the station sites considered. L-047.36

**Comment 32.**

The existing contamination of the three short listed Fall River overnight yard sites may preclude their use as train storage facilities. Until it is confirmed that the three listed sites are viable, they should be removed from the short list. L-047.37

**Comment 33.**

The construction of an overnight yard could impact the technical feasibility of the ongoing remediation of contaminated properties and could impact the cost and schedule of ongoing remediation efforts which are currently being implemented by the prior owner(s) of the sites and parties responsible for remediating the contamination. The presence of an overnight yard could also restrict the implementation of future remediation efforts. For example, the WCE site has an active groundwater pump and treat system (groundwater depression system) combined with LNAPL recovery wells (skimming wells) scattered across the property. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how the development of the overnight yard will impact the location of the existing extraction and injection wells as well as how the overnight facility will impact the routing of the various treatment system pipelines, electrical services, and compressed air services routed both aboveground and underground across the site. L-047.38

**Comment 34.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss whether or not the South Coast Rail Project developer intends to indemnify owners for possible increases in remediation costs that might arise should rail facilities be constructed on contaminated lands. The DEIS/DEIR should report who will be responsible for these incremental costs. L-047.39

**Comment 35.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss whether or not the South Coast Rail Project will assume responsibility for any releases of historical contamination that result from either the construction or operation of the Project. L-047.40

**Comment 36.**

The brownfield remediation plan being implemented at the WCE site contemplates drilling wells and extracting LNAPL from the thickest areas of the LNAPL plume under-laying the site. For maximum recovery at the lowest cost, extraction wells are located at the thickest area of the plume. The restrictions that an overnight yard might impose on the ability of a remediation system designer to install extraction well where they are needed (now and in the future) needs to be evaluated and discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.41

**Comment 37.**

The location of impervious surfaces associated with the overnight yard and their impact on groundwater flows and recharge rates should be discussed in cases such as the WCE site where the contamination can migrate and LNAPL plumes can shift. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how the construction and operation of the rail yard (in particular cut and fill operations) will impact local groundwater flows under the site. If groundwater flows will change, the DEIS/DEIR should discuss what steps will be taken to prevent contamination from migrating into uncontaminated or surrounding landholdings. L-047.42



**Comment 38.**

The rail stations are described as a net benefit to the communities that host them. The operation of rail lines is described in the DEIS/DEIR as a net negative to neighboring landowners. These two factors are spread relatively evenly into regions that lie inside and outside environmental justice areas. The DEIS should explain why the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, both cities subject to Environmental Justice concerns, should be saddled with all the undesirable Overnight Yard facilities when more affluent and well off communities do not have to host any overnight yard facilities.

L-047.43

**Comment 39.**

If the construction of overnight facilities on WCE's property prevents the construction of an LNG facility on the WCE site, Tax losses to the City of Fall River and the town of Somerset resulting from the loss of the LNG facility and Offshore Berth would exceed \$5 million per year in Fall River and several million per year in Somerset. Job losses due to the precluded development of the LNG facility would be 2,500,000 labor hours during construction and in excess of roughly 50 full time employees and an equivalent number of contract staff. These employment and tax issues should be discussed in the DEIR/DEIR. The net beneficial employment impacts of the Weaver's Cove project are discussed in the FEIS issued by FERC in May of 2005 for that project.

L-047.44

**Comment 40.**

The DEIS/DEIR fails to mention the new industrial park that is under development. The industrial park straddles the Fall River and Freetown borders (a new highway exit off route 24/79 which is currently being built by the state on this industrial estate – Stop and Shop is a tenant). This site is a potential location for overnight and layover facilities. The DEIS should include a map of the industrial estate clearly delineating the boundaries of the entire estate and those areas of the estate that are built out to date. Site specific wetland data should be readily available for this area as it has been under development for years. The total acreage of the estate and in particular the not yet built out areas should be delineated and recorded. The distance between the estate and the proposed routing of the Fall River line should be documented. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the feasibility of using this industrial estate as layover/overnight facilities. If some of the existing overnight facilities discussed in the appendix to the DEIS/DEIR are located in the industrial estate (no mention is made of this in the current DEIS/DEIR), the discussion of those facilities should be expanded to include a clear definition and description of the estate, the full boundaries of the estate, and current land uses (developed and built) within the estate. Layout drawings should be modified to include the estate boundaries and site specific wetland characterizations.

L-047.45

**Comment 41.**

The above comments should be applied to the Fall River Industrial park (formerly a municipal airport).

L-047.46

**Comment 42.**

With regards to placing an overnight yard on the WCE West Site, the DEIS/DEIR states (page 4.2-48):

*"Use of this site for this purpose [the siting of an LNG terminal] would preclude its use as a layover facility for the Fall River Secondary."*

In light of this statement, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why the Weaver's Cove site is on the short list of viable candidates for siting an overnight yard and is being subjected to continued study. The DEIS should clearly state that the Weaver's Cove site will not be used as a layover yard location if the Weaver's Cove LNG Facility is permitted, constructed and built. However, if the South Coast Rail Project and MDOT intend to pursue the WCE site for overnight yard locations, then the DEIS should explain what will happen should both the WCE and South Coast Rail Project move through the permitting process and go into construction. The DEIS should explain what will happen if South Coast Rail Project goes into construction before the Weaver's Cove LNG Project and vice versa. The DEIS should describe how conflicts will be managed.

L-047.47

**Comment 43.**

The ongoing permitting and development of the LNG terminal at the Fall River site is documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Certificate issued by FERC to WCE in 2005. That FEIS and Certificate issued to WCE are in the process of being modified to accommodate an offshore LNG vessel berth (applications made in 2008 – reviews pending). The US Coast Guard on July 30, 2009 issued a letter of recommendation supporting LNG vessel transits to this proposed berth. The permitting docket associated with the WCE Project (FERC Docket CP04-36 and the associate MEPA docket) reports that the entire WCE East Layover yard Property will be used as a construction staging area for the construction of the LNG Terminal. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss how the South Coast Rail project will accommodate this intended land use by WCE.

L-047.48

**Comment 44.**

No detailed analysis is provided in the DEIS/DEIR showing how the siting of an overnight rail yard facility near existing residential neighborhoods (north, south and across the street from the facility in the case of the WCE East site) will impact residential property values. The DEIS/DEIR does report that property values will drop 20% within 400 feet of an overnight yard facility. The DEIS/DEIR should provide references to the studies that support this 20% claim and provide an explanation of why the distance is limited to 400 feet. An analysis should be provided to document what the negative impacts might be at distances in increments of 400 feet up to the point where there is no anticipated negative on property value. The factors that influence these estimates should be documented (visual, noise, traffic, etc.). It would appear that at least a simple analysis was completed to address the impact of station sites on real estate values. The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to address these issues for overnight yards and midday layover facilities. Commuter rail stations and overnight/midday rail layover facilities each serve drastically different functions and have drastically different impacts. A single study cannot possibly address both uses. An additional study effort should be completed and the results reported in a revised DEIS/DEIR.

L-047.49

**Comment 45.**

Section 4.3.3.3 of the DEIS/DEIR states that for the Fall River Secondary “No Business or Community Facility displacements would occur along the Fall River Secondary.” This statement is not true if the Fall River West Overnight Yard is selected as the overnight yard option. The DEIS/DEIR reports that all of the property west of the tracks owned by Weaver’s Cove will be taken in this option. Construction of the Fall River West Overnight Yard alternative would result in the shut down of the Fall River Office of Weaver’s Cove Energy. Ten (10) people are currently employed at that facility. They would have to relocate to another facility – most likely outside Fall River. This is yet another example of how the current version of the DEIS/DEIR fails to take into account site specific information.

L-047.50

**Comment 46.**

In section 4.3.3.3 the tax revenue loss from the development of the Fall River Secondary is listed. It is not clear if this tax revenue loss includes the revenue loss that would result from the acquisition of the site for the Fall River Line Overnight Yard facilities. The DEIS/DEIR should provide clarity and include the tax losses that will result from all elements of the Project (including the Midday Layover Facilities where not a single site has even been proposed).

L-047.51

**Comment 47.**

Every single station along the entire train and bus line is clearly delineated and studied in sufficient detail that MDOT has been able to state with certainty where the preferred stations are located. In order for the DEIS/DEIR to be deemed complete and adequate, the preferred alternative for each of the overnight yard locations should be similarly defined, analyzed, and selected. Since a preferred alternative has not been selected, one can conclude that the needed level of detailed study and analysis has not yet been completed for the overnight and midday yard locations. It seems inappropriate that a facility like a “rail station” that according the DEIS/DEIR will increase local property values has been selected, while at the same time the locations of the overnight yard facilities that will have a negative effect on local property values and have negative effects on abutting land owners (e.g., noise, visual, traffic, etc.) have not been

L-047.52

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DEIR- EEA File #1434

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studied, documented, and then selected prior to the publication of the DEIS/DEIR. Playing up the benefits of the project while downplaying and failing to study the negative effects of the project is inconsistent with the spirit of the NEPA and MEPA review processes and may be contrary to regulatory standards and requirements.

L-047.52

**Comment 48.**

Section 4.3.12 (page 4.3-48) of the DEIS/FEIR states:

*"One midday train layover facility is planned for the Boston Area, but alternative sites have not been selected."*

L-047.53

The DEIS/DEIR should not be deemed adequate while it remains silent on the siting of the midday train layover facilities. The DEIS/DEIR document clearly states that midday layover capacity is required to make the South Coast Rail Project complete and functional. The DEIS/DEIR should scope alternative midday sites. Site specific data should be collected for each site considered including wetlands, noise, visual, air and other impacts. Neighbors bordering these facilities should be notified and asked to participate in the review process. The economic, environmental and operational efficiency of consolidating the midday and overnight facilities should be addressed as an alternative in the DEIS/DEIR.

If midday layover facilities cannot be sited near Boston as is currently assumed, then presumably the midday trains will have to lay over at the overnight yards which are currently being proposed at a limited number of locations in Fall River and New Bedford at the other end of the line from Boston. If ideally located midday facilities cannot be located near Boston, the DEIS should consider how "deadheading" of trains could be reduced if the overnight yards were moved closer to Boston and those overnight yards served as both midday and overnight facilities. The deadheading analysis in the current DEIS only addresses the overnight yards. The DEIS should take a broader view of the deadheading issue and should seek to minimize deadheading and running nearly empty trains by considering both the Midday and Overnight facilities in a single combined study of this issue.

The assumptions behind the placement of the overnight yards have not been adequately tested and evaluated and the information in the DEIS/DEIR does not provide sufficient information to complete such an analysis. The feasibility of the major layover facilities have not been tested to the point of proving that any one of them is viable. A DEIS/DEIR that does not list a preferred alternative for both midday facilities and Fall River and New Bedford Overnight yards is not complete.

L-047.54

**Comment 49.**

The siting of the overnight yards is slated for Fall River and New Bedford in order to reduce the adverse operating costs of train deadheading. The DEIS quotes a number of roughly \$100,000 per year in operating cost for each mile that the overnight yard is moved north of the terminal stations (at the "end of the line") in Fall River and New Bedford. This analysis is not complete as other economic factors are just as substantial and influential in the economics of yard selection. The analysis should include a long run economic analysis of all variable expenses and capital cost expenses that vary by overnight and midday yard locations. The DEIS should put the operating costs into context by considering and analyzing cost more broadly.

L-047.55

The DEIS should address deadheading costs relative to project development costs such as overnight yard site acquisition costs, rail yard construction costs (they can't be the same for each site), cut and fill costs, environmental remediation costs (capital and operating), etc. An economic analysis of the pros and cons of the various layover sites including both capital and operating costs should be presented in the DEIS/DEIR.



**Comment 50.**

An economic analysis should be completed to evaluate whether or not one single train overnight and midday yard facility located north of Fall River and New Bedford is preferable to the economic and environmental impacts of developing, constructing and operating three separate facilities (overnight yard in Fall River, overnight yard in New Bedford, midday facility at an unknown location) that serve roughly the same purpose. The environmental impacts of a single yard should be reduced because economies of scale would be achieved in operations when developing one slightly larger train storage site as opposed to three small ones. The DEIR/DEIS needs to address this concept. The current analysis is fractured into small components, many components are missing, and there is no comprehensive summary that supports a preferred alternative when compared to all the alternatives considered and all the factors (both economic and environmental) that should be considered.

L-047.56

**Comment 51.**

The WCE West Site Layover facility analysis documented in the DEIS/DEIR reports that Parcel T-15-2 as shown on figure 4.2-56 will be taken if the Weaver's Cove West layover facility is built (it is part of the 57.91 acres that would be taken by South Coast Rail— see table 4.2-29 on page 4.2-49). The DEIS/DEIR should discuss why this entire parcel must be taken to support the development of the overnight yard. The DEIS should also report who owns Parcel T-15-2. WCE believes the parcel was subdivided many years ago and the local electric utility owns a portion of this parcel and WCE owns a portion of this parcel. The DEIS/DEIR fails to report that a 300 foot tall transmission tower sits on the Eastern corner of what is depicted as parcel T-15-2. This transmission tower will be in the shadow of WCE East and West layover locations. This tower carries two major regional electric transmission circuits across the Taunton River while keeping the wire 150 feet above the surface of the water. Since the rail project intends to take the land under the Transmission Tower, the DEIS/DEIR should report how the transmission tower is going to be relocated and where it is going to be placed. The DEIS/DEIR should address what impact the South Coast Rail Facilities will have on these electric grid facilities.

L-047.57

If the South Coast Rail project does not intend to relocate the transmission tower, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how or why the presence of a 300 foot tall transmission tower that dominates the visual landscape was not addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. This type of oversight casts serious doubts as to whether MDOT has seriously considered how much land and in what locations that land is required to site the overnight facilities. This is why the overnight yard alternatives analysis report included in the appendix (see Appendix 3.2-E) is inadequate. Each alternative that is considered in that report should include a map showing parcels impacted, owners of those parcels should be listed and the layout of the facility should be depicted on figures drawn at a scale that wetland, cutting and grading work, land ownership and the location of rail facilities can be seen in detail. A quantitative analysis is needed instead of the simple set of guesses and hunches that are cobbled into a conclusion.

L-047.58

**Comment 52.**

In the write up of the Weaver's Cove West Layover site, the DEIS/DEIR refers to a nearby cell phone tower. Perhaps MDOT is mixing up the 300 foot transmission tower (see comment above) with the cell phone tower. The location of the cell phone tower discussed in the DEIS/DEIR should be located on a map and that map should be included in the DEIR/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss why the location of the cell phone tower is significant and how it will be impacted by the project or how the project will impact the cell phone tower.

L-047.59

**Comment 53.**

The DEIS/DEIR includes a table of contents. However, that table of contents does not include any listing of the appendices to the report. The DEIR/DEIS table of contents should include a listing of Appendices. Each report in the Appendix that runs more than a few pages should have its own table of contents.

L-047.60

**Comment 54.**

The appendix containing the field noise measurements is nothing more than a rough set of largely handwritten field notes that make little to no sense. This appendix should be reworked to include a description of the test methodology, maps of sampling locations, descriptions of how long the measurements were taken, descriptions of the test equipment, summaries of the data collected, and notes as to any abnormalities with regards to the data collected of the data collection process. The report should include a description of weather conditions (windy days tend to be noisier than calm days – on wet days road noise from tires increases) at the time the data was collected.

L-047.61

**Comment 55.**

MDOT is treating the overnight facility inconsistently when compared to the midday layover facilities required. MDOT simply states (without justification) that the overnight facility must be located at the end of both the Fall River and New Bedford lines. Yet MDOT does not dictate that the midday facilities must be located in Boston in order to avoid the economic and environmental costs of deadheading trains between the Boston and the unspecified location of the midday facility. This discrepancy in the site selection process should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR.

L-047.62

**Comment 56.**

The cost of deadheading trains is described as a key reason for locating the overnight yard as close to the terminus of the line as possible. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the impact of having several of the early morning trains leave the overnight yard and head north skipping any stations south of the overnight yard locations. This would have both a revenue impact (lost revenue – perhaps or maybe riders will have less selection as to departure times) and an operating cost savings (less deadheading expense). The impact of the revenue losses and cost saving should be addressed in the alternatives analysis associated with the location of the overnight yard facilities (a similar analysis should be completed with regards to the siting of the midday yard facilities). The DEIS/DEIR cannot simply “assume” or simply “dictate” that the costs associated with the moving the overnight yard several miles further to the north are unacceptable without providing an analysis explaining why having some trains miss stops at a few of the southernmost stations during the first day of the run is not acceptable. The analysis in Appendix 3.2-E of layover sites should be expanded to include this information. A robust and viable alternatives analysis does not simply assume the answer. More study is needed.

L-047.63

**Comment 57.**

Weaver's Cove Energy LLC has been discussing a modified version of the WCE East Site terminal layout that would involve a land swap between the railroad and WCE. This land swap would make more contiguous waterfront land available to WCE (improving the viability of the WCE site as a DPA) and would have the advantage of removing a curve from the Fall River spur, an advantage for MDOT. This alternative should be documented and included in the DEIS/DEIR.

L-047.64

**Comment 58.**

In Section 4.3.4.1 the construction impacts of the project are discussed for each rail section alternative. The same or very similar text is repeated for each segment of the project:

*“Based up the preliminary estimates of construction costs, the Corridor Plan suggests that “the total direct, indirect and induced economic effects within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of the rail alternatives would include about \$1.4 billion to \$1.8 billion in business output, which would in turn generate 6,800 -7,800 person-year jobs, and \$314-\$360 million in household income. “*

L-047.65

This text is used to describe the following alternatives:

1. Attleboro Electric Alternative (see page 4.3-53)
2. Attleboro Diesel Alternative (see page 4.3-57)
3. Stoughton Electric Alternative (see page 4.3-58)

4. Stoughton Diesel Alternative (see page 4.3-61)
5. Whittenton Electric Alternative (see page 4.3-62)
6. Whittenton Diesel Alternative (see page 4.3-65)

It is not credible to suggest that each alternative has the exact same (and very large) impact on economic activity in the region. By laying out one single large impact, the DEIS/DEIR seems to imply that direct, indirect, and induced economic effects are independent of the project alternative that is ultimately selected. The DEIS/DEIR as drafted misses the point. An alternatives analysis is supposed to compare and contrast alternatives. The analysis in the DEIR/DEIR needs to be made more granular. DIFFERENCES in the economic impact between each of the six alternatives listed above should be analyzed and included in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate and discuss the economic impacts for each discrete alternative and should document differences between alternatives.

L-047.65

This need for increased granularity applies equally to the analysis of the various bus route alternatives. It also defies logic that each bus route alternative would have the exact same impact on economic activity in the region. A more detailed analysis is needed to support the selection of the best project alternative.

**Comment 59.**

Page 4.3-69 under the heading "Summary of Impacts: Direct and Indirect Impacts" states:

*"The largest component of the property tax loss calculation is the \$40,410.88 estimate of loss for the Fall River Depot Station, an order of magnitude greater than for any other single project element except for the \$26,125.657 loss for the Mansfield station. Since the Fall River Station is common for all alternatives, this value dominates the total property tax loss calculation for all alternatives."*

L-047.66

This analysis is incomplete and misleading. The reported property tax loss for the WCE West Overnight site is listed at \$236,119.79 (see Table 4.2-29 on page 4.2-49), the property tax loss for the WCE East Overnight site is listed at \$57,317.75 (see Table 4.2-28 on page 4.2-48), and the property tax loss for the ISP Overnight site is listed at \$29,955.86 (see table 4.2-30 on page 4.2-49). These overnight yard real estate tax losses are much larger in magnitude than those reached in the section of the DEIS/DEIR that summarizes tax revenue losses from the development of the entire project. The DEIS/DEIR should reconcile these inconsistencies and demonstrate that the inconsistencies do not invalidate other conclusions drawn in the DEIS/DEIR that rely on a subset of the same data set.

The DEIS/DEIR states:

*"Impacts to land uses and social and economic environment from the layover facilities were excluded from this summary because sites have not been selected. Depending upon the selected layover facility site(s), land acquisition, property tax revenue loss, and residential and business development vary considerably by alternative."*

L-047.67

These statements demonstrate that MDOT has not studied the overnight yard locations to same degree as the station locations. This makes it impossible for the public and regulatory agencies to draw valid conclusions about the potential impacts of the South Coast Rail Project. The potential impacts for the layover yards are significant and should be addressed in the DEIR/DEIS. The results from a comprehensive analysis of the layover site(s) will and should significantly influence which alternative is selected and whether or not the project should be allowed to proceed. It should also be noted that that when describing the layover sites, the term "site(s)" is used. This suggests that MDOT has not determined whether or not a single or three or more layover facilities may be required (see Comment above that addresses this issue). The DEIS/DEIR as drafted remains a seriously flawed document.



The comparisons and conclusions drawn from many of the tables in the DEIS are fragmented and in some cases are meaningless because effects of the overnight and midday yards are not included. Examples include but are not limited to: L-047.68

Table 4.3-40 on page 4.3-68

Table 4.3-41 on page 4.3-71

Table 4.3-41 on page 4.3-78

The DEIS/DEIR should be updated to include overnight yard impacts.

**Comment 60.**

Based on the discussion beginning at the bottom of page 4.4-5 and ending on page 4.4-7, it appears that the Environmental Justice Analysis neglected to address impacts from the layover and midday facilities. The Environmental Justice Analysis in the DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to include midday and overnight layover facility impacts. L-047.69

**Comment 61.**

Page 4.4-20 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

*"Engineering plans for these facilities [the layover facilities] will be completed once the preferred sites have been selected."* L-047.70

The analysis that winnowed down the full listing of potential layover sites to a short list of three layover sites is flawed. The DEIS/DEIR concludes that three layover sites should be studied for the Fall River spur and two should be studied for the New Bedford spur. The impacts associated with alternative site layover locations can only be assessed after site specific conceptual designs have been developed.

Factors that should be considered include:

1. Economics (see pertinent comments made above).
2. Distance between sources (rail facility equipment) and sensitive receptors (houses, schools, etc) with regards to: noise, vibration, visual impacts, air quality, traffic,
3. the number of sensitive receptors that will be impacted near the site (the study includes no quantitative data)
4. site specific mitigation techniques should be considered for each of the above impacts.

Sufficient engineering analysis should be completed and reported in the DEIS/DEIR to document significant differences between the various sites considered. While completing this engineering work does cost money and take time, NEPA/MEPA policies and regulations demand that sufficient engineering work be done so the best sites can be selected and so the public can comment on the analysis and selection criteria.

**Comment 62.**

Section 4.4.4 on page 4.4-48 lists the steps that were taken to reach out to environmental justice neighborhoods. In the future, all such communications should include overnight and midday yard locations. Abutters with 1000 yards of these facilities should be notified via mail. L-047.71

**Comment 63.**

The DEIS/DEIR should include a visual description of what the overnight and midday facilities will look like and include an artists rendition. The number, shape and size of support buildings should be described (profile drawings of the sites should be developed documenting elevations in addition to more detailed layout drawings) and the nature of the activities conducted in those buildings should be documented. Architectural embellishments and landscaping considered to improve visual impacts should be described. L-047.72

**Comment 64.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss where and when the following activities will take place:

1. trash removal from the trains
2. water addition to the trains (where will it come from, how much?)
3. sewage removal from the trains (how much, how will it be handled, where will it go, how will it be transported?)
4. light and routine maintenance activities undertaken (describe them in some detail – overnight cleaning, painting, lubrication, etc)
5. heavy maintenance activities (describe them in some detail)
6. employee parking facilities required (number of spaces where located)
7. contractor parking facilities required (number of spaces and where located)
8. temporary construction laydown areas that will be impacted
9. loading of food service supplies.

L-047.73

**Comment 65.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss all of the activities that will be undertaken by the project while the trains are sitting in the midday and overnight facilities.

1. expected traffic to and from facility
2. expected staffing at the facility
3. amount of stormwater runoff from facility, projected stormwater quality, the systems used to treat this water, the location where it will be discharged to the environment.

L-047.74

**Comment 66.**

Page 4.5-15 of the DEIS/DEIR states that “this segment of the Taunton River has been designated as a ‘recreational river area,’ recognizing its aesthetic value and developed shoreline.” The DEIS/DEIR should report who made this designation and should explain what the standards to met for this designation is and how the Project complies with this designation. The standards that must be met in order to for the project to comply with this designation should be discussed and the accommodations made to ensure compliance should be reported. The regulatory review process associated with this designation should be described.

L-047.75

Later in the document the fact that the Taunton River has been designated as “Wild and Scenic” under the federal Wild and Scenic River Act (WSRA) is discussed. The DEIS/DEIR fails to report how the rail Project will comply with this designation of the river and it fails to describe the steps that will be taken to secure sign off from the Department of Interior that all elements of the project are consistent with the WSRA.

L-047.76

The DEIS/DEIR should explain how and why all elements of the project are consistent with the WSRA and all proposed or required mitigation measures should be discussed. The mitigation discussion should specifically address whether proposed mitigation is “in kind and in place” or if not “in kind in place” explain how the proposed mitigation addresses the project impact. The DEIS/DEIR is deficient in this regard and should be deemed inadequate.

**Comment 67.**

The description of each layover facility studied in Appendix 3.2-E and also in the body of the DEIS/DEIR should include the following facts:

1. A table showing the number of residences near the layover facilities and how far away they are. A table showing number of residences within 400 feet, 600 feet, 800 feet and 1000 feet (measured from the closest edge of the layover facility boundary to the residence) should be reported.
2. The distance to the closest church, hospital, school, nursing home, and other sensitive receptors should be reported.
3. The presence of vegetation or other screening effects between the sites and receptors should be reported.

L-047.77

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**Comment 68.**

While the proposed commuter rail stations will be exposed to “transit noise and vibration impacts” as discussed in the Section 4.6 of the DEIS/DEIR, the layover facilities will experience a drastically different set of impacts. The trains will be housed at these facilities for extended periods of time and not simply passing through. An undefined number of workers will be servicing/cleaning/handling the trains at these locations. Hence the noise analysis required to assess the impact of the yards is drastically different than the noise analysis needed to assess passing trains. The noise analysis provided on page 4.6-36 for the overnight yard only accounts for a single idling train. This overly simple analysis fails to report the magnitude of the noise and vibration levels at the closest receptor. The analysis should be expanded to address the following additional factors:

L-047.78

1. The noise level of a train when it is gearing up to push a full set of cars from a standstill and is working to overcome standing friction.
2. The noise emanating from squealing wheels as the trains pass through the switches into the various sections of the yard.
3. The squealing of the brakes when the trains stop in the yard.
4. The clanking of the rail switches in the yard as they are set from one position to another should be considered.
5. The slamming of train couplings as the trains are hooked together.
6. The noise levels from train maintenance activities should be addressed.
7. The noise associated with any air compressors that will be installed on the site.
8. The noise levels associated with any electric substation that will be installed
9. The noise levels associated with any transformers.

Cumulative noise impacts from all of these factors for the maximum number of trains that can be located on the overnight yard sidings should be considered because simply studying a single idling train paints an inaccurate and incomplete picture and is not sufficient.

**Comment 69.**

A large number of trains will be pulling into and out of the overnight yard during early morning and late night hours. Background noise levels at sensitive receptors surrounding each alternative site should be measured. Both short term and week long data should be collected. Increases in noise levels above current background conditions should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR as well as their frequency and duration. The hours of day and night that these noises will be generated should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR.

L-047.79

A similar analysis should be included in the DEIS/DEIR for the construction related noise impacts.

The background noise data measured for the Project should be expanded to include sensitive receptor sites around specific layover facility locations. The hours of the day/night and at what locations around the background noise levels listed in table 4.6-9 on page 4.6-36 of the DEIS/DEIR should be documented. The measurement locations should be reported on a map that also shows the location of the sensitive receptors.

It is not clear from the current write up in the DEIS/DEIR whether or not the few noise measurements that were taken were long term (days or weeks) or short term (minutes/seconds/hours). The weighting scale used to collect the measurements is not reported. The concept of a weighting scale is not even discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to include a background write up describing how noise measurements are collected and reported. The equipment used to collect the measurements should be reported. The last date that the equipment was calibrated should be reported. The weather conditions when the data was collected should be reported. The training of the individuals taking the noise measurements should be reported. Noise levels at night should be compared to noise levels during the day. Peak noise levels should be discussed. Average noise levels should be discussed and periods of low noise levels should be described.



The DEIS/DEIR should describe the nature of the single noise impact associated with WCE West Layover site listed in Table 4.6-39 on page 4.6-36. L-047.79

**Comment 70.**

The above discussion focuses on operational noise. The DEIS/DEIR fails to include any meaningful analysis and discussion of construction related noise impacts. Along the linear expanse of the rail lines, construction noise impacts are generally temporary as the construction crews move down the line and do not remain in any one location a significant period of time. Even so, DEIS/DEIR should document how long each construction crew will be within range of a sensitive receptor and how much noise will be created and how loud it will be. L-047.80

The issue of construction noise impacts is more important for overnight yard and midday yard locations and as a result a more detailed analysis should be provided for yard sites. Construction impacts in a midday or overnight yard are of a longer duration – hence sensitive receptors are exposed for a longer period of time because more work is done over a longer period of time at a single site of a limited size than is typically case for rail line construction. The DEIS/DEIR should address the nature of the construction equipment that will be used in the yard, the number of pieces of noise generating equipment that will be used, how long they will be used and how many pieces of equipment will be operating at one point in time. The hours of day and night that the equipment will operate should also be reported.

**Comment 71.**

It is not clear if the air quality emissions listed in Table 4.9-23 include the emissions from multiple trains running at the same time in the Layover facility. The applicant should model the maximum number of trains that will be operating in the yard at any one time. The location of each train modeled should be reported and the location of the closest sensitive receptors should be reported along with estimated air quality conditions at those receptors. The emissions study should address what happens when emissions spike as trains move from idling mode to actually pushing cars around the yard. The wind conditions that were modeled should be discussed. Downwash effects of local structures and topography should be reported. L-047.81

**Comment 72.**

Remediation of the WCE East and WCE West sites are the subject of a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) under the MCP. Construction of layover facility on either the Weaver's Cove West or East sites will involve making changes to the remediation system. The nature of the required modifications should be described. Site specific steps taken by MDEP to comply with PIP and MCP should be described in the DEIS/DEIR. Any MDOT actions undertaken at the site must comply with the Public Involvement Plan. The DEIS/DEIR should describe the PIP process and how the applicant plans to comply with that process. The project sponsor should be asked to directly contact the leaders of the PIP group to apprise them of this proposed development and notify them that PIP site is being considered as an overnight yard site. L-047.82

**Comment 73.**

The Coastal Zone Management Act is implemented by Massachusetts under 301 CMR 20.00 The policy appendix to 301 CMR 20.00 is codified at 301 CMR 98. 301 CMR 98 (7) reads in part as follows:

*"PORTS POLICY #3. Preserve and enhance the capacity of Designated Port Areas (DPAs) to accommodate water-dependent industrial uses, and prevent the exclusion of such uses from tidelands and any other DPA lands over which a state agency exerts control by virtue of ownership, regulatory authority, or other legal jurisdiction."* L-047.83

Since the WCE West Layover facility is located on DPA land, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the siting of this layover facility is going to demonstrate compliance with CZM Ports Policy #3. In particular, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the DPA land owned by WCE and being directly impacted by the overnight yard siting will be enhanced as a DPA by the development of an overnight yard on the property.

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The DEIS should report that failure to satisfy this Policy will prevent the issuance of the CZM approval by the State under Federal law and this would block the development of the project and the construction of the overnight yard on the WCE West site. L-047.83

**Comment 74.**

Page 4.18-3 of the DEIS/DEIR states:

*"New Nonwater-dependent use projects are permitted within Designated Port Areas (DPA), according to the waterways regulations at 310 CMR 9.32 (1) (b) (4). A detailed description of DPAs is provided in section 4.18.2.1.6"* L-047.84

The referenced section (4.18.2.1.6) of the DEIS/DEIR does appear in the current version of the DEIS/DEIR. The section of the DEIS/DEIR that does address DPA issues fails to map the elements of the project that may rest in Designated Port Areas. Figure 4-18-1c is drawn at a scale that makes it difficult if not impossible to understand the impact of the Project on the Fall River DPA area near Battleship Cove. The boundary of the DPA land near the Battleship Cove area should be mapped and the land being utilized should be clearly depicted in the DEIS/DEIR. Land ownership within the DPA should be reported on a parcel by parcel basis.

**Comment 75.**

The DPA drawing of the WCE site as depicted in Figure 4.18-1b only depicts the WCE East layover alternative. The labeling of Figure 4.18-1b should be corrected to clearly indicate that the layover facility depicted with shading on the drawing is the "East" WCE Layover Facility – the term "East" needs to be added to the descriptor. A new Figure that is referenced from the section of the DEIS/DEIR that directly addresses the DPA issue should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. This new figure should depict the Weaver's Cove West Layover facility falling within the depicted Fall River DPA area. The drawing should include all the structures that MDOT intends to place on DPA land – layover facilities and any other facilities. The DEIS/DEIR indicates that Mass DOT intends to take the entire area of the WCE DPA (over 50 acres) should the West Layover Facility be selected. L-047.85

**Comment 76.**

The DEIS should clearly articulate how 310 CMR 9.32(1) (b) (4) is being interpreted to allow the construction of non-water dependant facilities within a DPA (see reference on page 4.18-3). A more detailed interpretation and explanation of how the project elements will comply with DPA regulations and Massachusetts law should be included within the text of the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should report if this exemption for non water dependant uses applies equally to all elements of the project (stations, layover facilities, running track, bridges, etc.), or if its application varies from project element to project element. If the exemption only applies to particular facilities, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why this is the case. L-047.6

**Comment 77.**

Some elements of the project are subjected to Chapter 91 jurisdiction, some elements of the project are subject to CZM jurisdiction, and some elements are subject to both. The DEIS/DEIR simply contains one generic listing of facilities that are subject to these three categories of review. For clarity the DEIS should separately list those elements of the project subject to CZM review. A separate list should identify those elements subject to Chapter 91 review. Finally a third list should identify those elements subject to both reviews. L-047.87

**Comment 78.**

On page 4.18-8, the DEIS in Section 4.14.8 states that a:

*"more detailed review of the project's compliance with the regulatory policies of the MCZMP is provided in section 4.14.8."* L-047.88

The current version of the DEIS/DEIR does not include a section 4.14.8. If this text is supposed to refer to section 4.18.5, beginning on page 4.18-31, this section should be expanded to discuss each element of the project separately. Each of the twenty program policies and nine management principles should be applied to each major element of the project that will be subject to CZM review. A table of all of these elements of the project subject to CZM review should be created.

L-047.88

**Comment 79.**

Page 4.18-8, the DEIS/DEIR states:

*"The continued use and anticipated replacement/upgrade or enhancement track within the Coastal Zone and DPAs is consistent with the regulatory policies of the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Plan. These improvements will maintain or enhance the capacity of the affected Coastal Zone and DPA to support marine based industry. A more detailed review of the project's compliance with regulatory policies of the MCZMP is provided in Section 4.14.8."*

L-047.89

Here again the reference is wrong and there is no explanation in the DEIS to document how the project supports marine based industry and the operation of the DPAs. Building rail road tracks into a DPA that has no rail could certainly could expand intermodal transport between ship and rail, but these facilities already exist today within the DPA so the addition of the tracks is neither new or an improvement.

An overnight yard does not enhance intermodal transport – especially when alternative overnight yard locations are available outside the DPA. Building a train station or a layover facility within a DPA, when these facilities are clearly not water dependant and could be built elsewhere, does not maximize the utility of the limited acreage of DPA space available within the Commonwealth. The DEIS/DEIR should clearly articulate how the project supports marine based industry. In particular, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the siting of the layover facilities on the land owned by WCE will enhance WCE's ability to site a marine based LNG import terminal at that site.

**Comment 80.**

The DEIS/DEIR reports that the filled tideland areas were defined based on GIS data provided by MassGIS and Massachusetts MDEP (see bottom of page 4.18-3). The DEIS/DEIR should clearly reference the specific documents or data sources that were used to define the historic mean high water line markings within these GIS layers. The DEIS/DEIR should specify what data was entered into the GIS program to define the historical shoreline. If historical maps were used to set the historic shoreline in the GIS layer, the specific maps used at each specific location should be cited. The scale of these original maps should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR and the DEIS/DEIR should report whether or not these original maps were drawn before or after the original rail line was installed.

L-047.90

**Comment 81.**

The issue of the location of historical high water lines is also discussed on page 4.18-25. The two historic maps used to fix the shoreline should be entered into the record and posted in the FEIS. These 1865 and 1874 documents cover very large areas on such small maps that precise shoreline determinations are very difficult if not impossible to determine. The shoreline on the 1865 drawing often does not match the shoreline depicted in the 1874 drawing – even when it is clear that there had been no filling between the time the two maps were created. More localized and more detailed drawings with higher resolution often conflict with these larger area drawings near the Weaver's Cove site. A number of historic Chapter 91 drawings for structures along the shoreline in the area of Weaver's Cove provide a more precise indication of the location of the historic shoreline. These references should be utilized.

L-047.91



**Comment 82.**

The proposed rail crossing of the Taunton River (the "Taunton River Crossing") is shown in Figure 4.18-2a and discussed on page 4.18-10 where the expansion of the bridge is briefly described as single track crossing. The DEIS/DEIR should substantiate its claims that navigation on the river will be improved by replacing wooden piles with concrete piles and with a wider two track span. An apparent conflict in the DEIS/DEIR as to the number of tracks that will span the river also needs to be resolved. Page 4.18-19 lists all the Taunton River Bridges as single track crossings. Other descriptions describe a double track crossing.

L-047.92

**Comment 83.**

The DEIS/DEIR should describe the surface area of river bottom consumed by the wooden piles being removed versus the surface area covered by the new concrete piles. The DEIS/DEIR should report if there will be a net reduction or net increase in impacted river bottom. This same type of analysis and type of data should be reported for each bridge crossing and every element of in water work.

L-047.93

**Comment 84.**

The DEIS/DEIR should explicitly address how the free flow of the river will be impacted by changes to structures in the Taunton River. The DEIS/DEIR should explain how navigation on the river is improved if the vertical clearance between the water surface and bottom of the bridge span is decreased by 7.5 inches. The DEIS/DEIR should explain what designation (Scenic, Recreational, other) the National Park Service has placed on each segment of the river where in water work or work adjacent to the river will take place.

L-047.94

**Comment 85.**

The DEIS/DEIR should address how the new bridge will not have an adverse impact on any of the outstanding resource values (ORV) associated with affected section of the river as defined under the Wild and Scenic River Act. The DEIS/DEIR should list each specific ORV.

L-047.95

**Comment 86.**

Page 4.18-19 of the DEIS/DEIR refers to Figure 4.18-5e and states that the Taunton River crossing will involve replacing three bridges with new single track crossing. The DEIS/DEIR should include a detailed analysis of how each Bridge complies with the Wild and Scenic River Act. Many of the river crossings associated with the Project involve crossing of rivers that flow into the Taunton River. Since these rivers are tributaries to the Taunton River, the DEIS/DEIR should address how these elements of the project comply with the Wild and Scenic River Act. As a part of this analysis, the DEIS/DEIR should report on potential impacts to anadromous fish. The DEIS/DEIR should document any proposed steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate construction and operational impacts including underwater noise impacts to migrating fish or to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts associated with turbidity arising from in water work or from storm water flowing off the bridges into the river. The same Wild and Scenic River analysis should be incorporated in the DEIS/DEIR for the busway route which follows Route 24 over the Taunton River.

L-047.96

**Comment 87.**

The DEIS should provide the scientific data that the Department of Interior will rely upon to complete a "Section 7" determination that the various project elements are in accord with the Wild and Scenic River Act. The Wild and Scenic River act has been documented to stop a number of the bridge development projects across the country.

L-047.97

**Comment 88.**

The DEIS/DEIR should explain how the movement of commuter rail passengers into and out of Battleship Cove station will improve the capacity of the Designated Port Area in which it is to be constructed. The station is a non-water dependant use that could and should be located outside the DPA.

L-047.98

**Comment 89.**

Page 4.18-25 the DEIS/DEIR states:

*"The use of the site [Weaver's Cove Energy East Layover Site] for layover needs is expected to be classified by DEP as a nonwater dependent Infrastructure Facility (310 CMF 9.55). This classification may waive some of the above referenced provisions, as long as feasible mitigation or compensation measures are provided such as the protection of maritime commerce or recreation and associated public access, reduction of flood and erosion-related hazards on lands subject to 100-year flood or projected sea level rise, and the attainment of water quality goals."*

L-047.99

The DEIS/DEIR should list specifically which of the "referenced provisions" will be exempted. The impact that these exemptions have on the project should be described. The DEIS/DEIR should list the specific mitigation that will be applied to bring the project into compliance and the potential impacts associated with implementing that mitigation should be reported. The DEIS/DEIR should report whether "in place and in kind" mitigation is being proposed or will the mitigation be implemented in areas miles away from the layover facility and not replicate the same type of resources that are being impacted. The DEIS/DEIR should address what impacts might flow from the required mitigation programs that might be considered.

**Comment 90.**

Page 4.18-26 states:

*"The Waterway's License determination for the installation and backfilling of the PiP LNG Transfer system confirmed that the site includes filled tidelands."*

L-047.100

This statement cannot be correct. MDEP has not even begun to process any of WCE's Pipe-in-Pipe (PiP) permit applications. No determinations have been issued for the PiP system by MDEP and MDEP has made it clear in writing that it will not issue any determination until such time as Weaver's Cove Energy's MEPA review of the PiP system is completed. Statements made in the DEIS/DEIR should clearly reference the permit decision document upon which conclusions are being drawn. No reference has been provided and therefore the veracity of the claim being made is difficult to test/check/confirm. In this case, the text is NOT factually correct.

**Comment 91.**

The statements about WCE's waterfront parcels on page 4.18-25 during the description of the WCE West Layover site and public access to the waterfront area is confusing, inaccurate, and not supported by any facts in the DEIS/DEIR. The text states:

L-047.101

*"However, there are some areas of the site where informal public access seems to be achieved, namely the northernmost vegetated portion via a series of pathways off of North Main Street."*

The DEIS/DEIR should define what is meant by "informal public access." The informal access route should also be mapped in the DEIS/DEIR. If the informal access route involves crossing an active rail line, the DEIS/DEIR should explain the specific rights the public has to make such a crossing of an active rail line in an area where there is no crossing agreement. If the route includes crossing privately held land, the DEIS/DEIR should document the rights that the public has to cross private property. WCE's property (including the wooded area described) is regularly patrolled by security staff and public access is not allowed to the waterfront area across lands owned by Weaver's Cove and this should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR.

WCE is not aware of any public crossing of the railroad in the vicinity of the WCE parcel that would provide any legal access by the public to the waterfront area in question. The only access that we are aware of to the waterfront area in question is via the Taunton River and boat. The reported pathways off North Main Street to the waterfront need to be documented in a map. This is true not only for the WCE site but in other cases where similar descriptions are made within the FEIS/DEIR regarding access to other waterfront areas by the public. L-047.101

**Comment 92.**

On page 4.18-29 of the DEIS/DEIR a statement is made as to what constitutes "Maintenance and Repair" as defined by 310 CMR 9.22(1). A portion of the regulation is quoted and then the following statement is made: L-047.102

*"This is interpreted to mean that repair, replacement, and maintenance activities may be permitted to restore the serviceability of tracks, bridges, culverts, etc. provided that the work does not include addition of new tracks within the jurisdictional area not contemplated by the original license."*

The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to explain why the interpretation above us consistent with the regulations. The full text of the regulation clearly states if the facility is "enlarged" a new license is required. The DEIS/DEIR should explain why the number of tracks is determinative as to whether or not a new permit is required as the plain text of the regulation leads to a different conclusion. A facility is enlarged when the footprint of the impacted area increases. The footprint of the area impacted can increase even when the number of tracks does not increase. The DEIS/DEIR should explain why conceptual level design drawings are not needed to determine if a new license is or is not required because such drawings would enable the reader to access impacts from the changes being made to the rail system and the footprint of that system.

**Comment 93.**

On page 4.18-29 a statement is made describing what constitutes a "Minor Project Modification" as defined by 310 CMR 9.22(3). A portion of the regulation is quoted: L-047.103

*"Structural alternations which are confined to the existing footprint of fill and structures being altered and which represent an insignificant deviation from the original license specification in terms of size, configuration, materials, or other relevant design or fabrication parameters"*

and then the following statement is made:

*"In the case of authorized jurisdictional crossings that are determined by DEP to be jurisdictional, minor modifications may typically be obtained for work that a) reduces or maintains the footprint of existing fill or structures; and b) maintains or increases the space available for navigation."*

The document then states:

*"The jurisdictional analysis conducted to date includes a preliminary assess of non-tidal river and stream crossings. Additional field investigation is required to clarify the potential jurisdiction of many of these crossings. Crossing (SIC) determined to be jurisdictional will be reviewed for approval as maintenance, repair or minor modification."*

The permitting requirements for each crossing should proposed by the applicant and that information should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR cannot be deemed complete if the permitting plans for each element of the project cannot be determined. If additional analysis needs to be completed, it should be completed before the DEIS/DEIR is published. The document does not even list the number



of river crossing that are being proposed. The document fails to define which crossing are and are not jurisdictional under the CZM and Chapter 91 programs. More work is required to complete the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.103

**Comment 94.**

In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 requirements within DPAs. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.34 speaks to compliance with Municipal Harbor Plans. A reference should be provided to Fall River's Approved and Final Municipal Harbor Plan. If an approved plan exists, the DEIS/DEIR should reference it. The agencies that have approved the plan (city and state government?) should be clearly described in the DEIS/DEIR and include same in the appendices. If the plan has been approved by the Department of Commerce as part of the approved CZM plan, the document memorializing the Department of Commerce's approval of that plan should be referenced. If the plan has not be finalized and fully approved under CZM regulatory requirements and instead only exists in draft or development form, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why a draft and unapproved plan is determinative in CZM permitting issues and why the draft plan is enforceable under the CZM program. L-047.104

**Comment 95.**

In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.37 speaks to Engineering and Construction Standards. The standards that will be used for the construction of the facilities should be listed in the DEIS/DEIR. Different elements of the project will be built to different standards. The DEIS/DEIR should describe which standards apply to each of the discrete elements of the Project. The DEIS/DEIR fails to even explain how many elements of the project and which elements of the project are subject to jurisdiction. More work is required to complete the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.105

**Comment 96.**

In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.38 speaks to Use standards for Recreational Boating Facilities. The DEIS/DEIR states that no recreational boating facility enhancements will be constructed as part of the project. This implies that none of the mitigation associated with the project will include the addition of, or improvements to, recreational boating facilities. This is a clear example of why the mitigation associated with the Project must be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.106

The mitigation contemplated to ensure compliance with the Wild and Scenic River Act needs to be described in the DEIS/DEIR. The Taunton River was designated as a Wild and Scenic River due at least in part to outstanding "recreational" values. It is therefore plausible, that some type of recreational facility improvements will be included in the ultimate mitigation package. Chapter 91 will apply to these "recreational" mitigation works and a discussion of such should be included in the DEIS/DEIR.

**Comment 97.**

In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 Basic requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.38 speaks to Dredging and Dredge Material Disposal. The DEIS/DEIR reports that the project will not include any dredging or dredge material disposal. The DEIR/DEIS should affirmatively state that during all bridge construction elements of the project and all near shore track work, no sediments will be removed from any river or any water body. If, on the other hand, sediments are to be removed anywhere from below the water surface, this constitutes dredging – and dredging permits and dredging review is warranted. If sediments are to be removed, the location and extent (volumes removed, acreage impacted) of the dredging should be documented, removal techniques should be discussed, and timing of the work clearly articulated in the DEIS/DEIR. This would include the removal of in water sediments using equipment that is staged from land. Dredging occurs whenever in water sediments are removed and dredge permitting requirements cannot be bypassed simply because the equipment doing the work is staged from land or does not resemble a clamshell or hydraulic dredge (dredging can be done from a backhoe staged from land). L-047.107

In most dredging operations, the timing of the work must be controlled by the imposition of dredge windows to ensure work is timed to protect fish populations. If any sediments are removed from below the water line, dredging is being conducted and the potential impacts and mitigation should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR and the required permitting steps should be described.

L-047.107

While it is possible, it does seem odd that for a project of this magnitude and with the number of river crossings and water body crossings, that no dredging will be conducted.

**Comment 98.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss bridge construction techniques. For example, if coffer dams will be created with sheet pile placement in the water, the construction techniques should be discussed and methods used to dewater the coffer dam should be addressed. Potential impacts from in water construction activities should be addressed. The species of fish that might be impacted and the steps taken to protect those species should be discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should demonstrate that in-water work will be timed to avoid impacts to the various life stages of aquatic species and should describe construction techniques to avoid and minimize impacts.

L-047.108

**Comment 99.**

In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 Basic requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.55 addresses compliance with the Standards for Nonwater-dependant Infrastructure Facilities. The DEIS/DEIR needs to be expanded to specifically identify which elements of the project are water dependent and which elements of the project are not. The DEIS/DEIR should clearly state the regulatory approval path that is being sought for each element of the project. Each element of the project should be listed in a table and the regulatory review standards that apply to each element should be reported.

L-047.109

Those elements of the project that are water dependent must meet a different set of regulatory standards than those that are not water dependent. NEPA and MEPA are designed to make sure that all the regulatory agencies and the public have a firm foundation based on the facts prior to the initiation of detailed permitting efforts. Which permitting path is implemented on each element of the project will determine the nature and amount of mitigation that is required to satisfy the regulatory requirements.

If mitigation is required, the nature of the mitigation and its potential positive and negative impacts should be part of the regulatory review and reported in the DEIS/DEIR. That is why the Chapter 61 findings are an essential part of completing the MEPA process. Section 61 findings can only be completed once the nature of the mitigation required is well understood and the need for the mitigation can only be understood based on an understanding of how each element of the project will be permitted. Simply put, these issues need to be resolved when the project is still subject to ongoing MEPA review with its public input process being allowed to function.

**Comment 100.**

The statement at the top of page 4.18-3 demonstrates that a fundamental flaw in the review process exists in the current version of the DEIS/DEIR:

L-047.110

*“Additional field investigations and consultations with Massachusetts DEP is required to clarify the potential jurisdiction at many of these crossings.”*

Additional field investigations and site specific data should have been collected and analyzed before the DEIS/DEIR was issued. MDOT should explain in the DEIS/DEIR the regulatory path they intend to pursue to secure the required approval to build every element of the project. The regulatory agencies and the public reviewing the DEIS/DEIR can then comment on the adequacy of these permitting and approval approaches. The need for additional work in this regard is evident not only for the river crossings but for each discrete element of the Project.

**Comment 101.**

Section 4.18.5 on page 4.18-31 takes a broad brush approach to proving that the entire project meets the Coastal Zone Management requirements. The CZM program and policies only apply to specific elements of the Project. Section 4.18.5 should be much more granular and should apply each of the listed standards to each element of the project that is subject to CZM jurisdiction. (see Comment above –each element of the project subject to CZM review should be listed in a table). For example how does the Weaver's Cove West Layover Facility comply with Ports Policy #3 when viable sites for this element of the Project exist outside the DPA boundaries? The DEIS/DEIR only addresses Ports Policy #3 (on page 4.18-35) for the Battleship Cove Station element of the project. By failing to conduct an element by element review, the current draft of the DEIS has failed to capture the full impact of the all the CZM policies and mandates.

L-047.111

**Comment 102.**

The DEIS/DEIR should address how the construction of layover facilities and commuter rail stations within the boundaries of a DPA meet CZM Ports Management Principle #1. The discussion should address the fact that viable alternatives outside DPA boundaries for the layover and commuter rail station elements of the project are available to the project and are feasible.

L-047.112

**Comment 103.**

The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.18-35:

*"The use of existing, active rail segments with the Coastal Zone does not preclude the development of any proposed public access paths in this area."*

L-047.113

This statement should be qualified to state that the Project will not preclude the use of any existing public use where a legal right to cross the railroad right of way exists today and where trespass is not involved. (See prior Comments on this issue) The DEIS/DEIR should report where each of the public access paths to the waters subject to Coastal Zone Management jurisdiction are located. Maps should be provided showing where and how access is provided. Usage levels of these pathways should be detailed in the DEIS/DEIR.

**Comment 104.**

As stated in one of the above comments, mitigation implemented to address the unavoidable environmental impacts of this Project may involve improvements to public access to the waterway. If public access improvements will or may ultimately be included in the mitigation plan, they should be addressed under MEPA through the Section 61 findings. The impact of these mitigation plans on CZM Public Access Management Principle #1, 2, 3 and 4 needs to be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR.

L-047.114

**Comment 105.**

If this project adversely impacts the development of the WCE LNG import terminal, this Project will have an impact on CZM Energy Policy #1 (see page 4.8-36 of the DEIS/DEIR). This issue should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. The LNG facility is a proposed coastally dependent energy facility.

L-047.115

**Comment 106.**

Appendix 3.2-E - Layover Facility Alternatives Analysis simply assumes that using the same facilities to layover midday and evening trains in a single facility makes no sense. The DEIS/DEIR should include a technical and economic analysis to support this view. Both capital and operating costs of the alternatives should be considered. The impact of layover facility location on ridership and revenue should be addressed in light of tradeoffs associated with deciding to deadhead select early morning trains versus simply letting some other trains run north bypassing one or more stations located south of the overnight layover facility.

L-047.116



**Comment 107.**

On page D-2 of Appendix 3.2-E, the statement is made that the cost to the MBTA of operating a commuter rail train in 2007 was \$10 per revenue mile. The report then assumes that the cost of moving a train per non-revenue mile is \$7.50. The DEIS/DEIR should include an analysis to support this assumption. The analysis should itemize the costs that are included in the estimate cost of moving a train one non-revenue mile in a deadheading operation. Variable and fixed costs should be identified. Overhead costs should be identified.

L-047.117

**Comment 108.**

The conceptual layout drawings included in Attachment A of Appendix 3.2-E are plotted at a scale that renders them nearly useless in assessing the viability of any site for a layover yard. The drawings should be re-plotted at a scale where more detail is shown. Property lines should be shown. Owners of the properties should be identified. Key nearby features such as sensitive noise receptors and areas needing cut and fill should be recorded.

L-047.118

**Comment 109.**

The Overnight facility alternatives evaluated in Appendix 3.2-E do not clearly show the boundaries of the entire Fall River/Freetown Industrial Estate (the one that includes the Stop and Shop facility and the one that will be serviced by the new highway interchange on Route 24 that is currently under construction). The Appendix should be modified to include a clear drawing with the boundaries of the entire industrial estate superimposed on an aerial photograph of this estate. Siting an overnight rail yard facility inside this industrial estate would be compatible with local land uses. The current alternatives report does not even recognize the existence of this industrial estate, an effort that is being spearheaded by local government bodies.

L-047.119

**Comment 110.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E evaluated layover yard locations south of Battleship Cove (beyond the last proposed station) in Fall River. The old rail line heading south of Battleship Cove at one time ran down into Rhode Island and onto Aquidneck Island. MDOT should expand Appendix 3.2-E to consider layover yard locations in Tiverton, Rhode Island or even further south. The current layover yard alternatives analysis report clearly states that sites beyond a given mileage south of the terminus are preferable to those located the same mileage north of the terminus (as the southerly locations don't involve turning the trains around before taking them to the overnight yard). If locations as far as nine miles north of Fall River Depot were considered, then locations roughly the same distance down the old rail line heading south into Rhode Island should be evaluated in the alternatives analysis.

L-047.120

**Comment 111.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E does not state if there is an advantage to having the overnight layover facility on the east or the west side of the right of way. This issue should be addressed in the report.

L-047.121

**Comment 112.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E states that incremental train variable operating costs are only \$90,000 per year per mile when the layover yard is located away from the terminus of the line (the last station to the south). This number is used to justify the selection of sites close to the line terminus in Fall River and New Bedford. Proper economic analysis of long lived assets requires that consideration be given to other costs such as capital costs of the building the facilities and the differential operating costs differences between operating the layover yard at different locations. In this proposed approach, capital cost differences between building the layover yard at one location versus another should be considered.

L-047.122

For example the amount of grading that must be done at each of the sites considered in the Appendix 3.2-E report should be estimated and typical cost for one yard of excavation and one yard of fill should be estimated and these figures used to estimate the grading cost for each site. Similar differential capital costs should be estimated for other construction activities at each site. Only with this more complete cost data set can the figure of \$90,000 per year per mile be deemed significant in terms of layover site selection.

L-047.122

**Comment 113.**

Page D-17 of Appendix E-3.2 states that the WCE East property “does not have any permanent improvements proposed as part of the LNG terminal proposal.” This is not true. This site will house a new high pressure interstate natural gas pipeline designed to transport natural gas from the LNG facility to natural gas consumers throughout New England. The proposed layover site is also the site of a proposed wetlands mitigation area that is now a firm commitment made by WCE in the MEPA review process for the LNG project. WCE also has plans to use rights it holds in an existing “at grade” crossing from its property East of the track to gain access to the lands it owns West of the tracks. This will provide an alternative entrance to the site that will be available in special circumstances should the primary entrance not be available. It also is possible that the ongoing permitting of the LNG facility may require some design changes that may result in some of the LNG facilities moving from East side of the tracks to the West side of the tracks. As an example, existing water injections wells associated with the environmental remediation of the property may have to be moved to the East side of the tracks or additional wells may have to be added East of the tracks. These use conflict issues need to be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR for the South Coast Rail Project.

L-047.123

**Comment 114.**

Appendix 3.2-E and the DEIS/DEIR fail to take into account the willingness of the landowner to sell land to the railroad. This is one factor that should be considered in selecting the siting of any Project facilities.

L-047.124

**Comment 115.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E evaluates layover site number 4 on the Fall River line. The DEIS/DEIR states:

L-047.125

*“The site would not be large enough to accommodate a layover facility without acquiring a portion of the Fall River Country Club.”*

The small 1.5 inch by 3 inch drawings included in the report make it impossible to tell how much land would have to be acquired, where that land is located, and whether or not it is in active use by the country club or if it is idle land sitting down gradient from the golf course which sits above the tracks. The amount and location of the land that might have to be taken from the country club should be reported and a figure should be included that clearly delineates the existing railroad land, the boundaries of the country club land, and the location of the land that would need to be taken to make Site 4 viable. The report also talks about a need to excavate cuts to achieve the necessary grading of the layover track. This would tend to place the facility in a depression out of the view of the neighbors and the club – an excellent visual mitigation tool and noise screening tool. The report should discuss the benefits of this visual and noise mitigation.

**Comment 116.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E discussed a number of layover facilities that were not large enough to accommodate the full number of sidings desired and were eliminated early in the review process. If two or three trains worth of capacity is available at a location south of Fall River Depot, the DEIS/DEIR should discuss the feasibility of building two smaller overnight facilities. One located in the ideal location and the other in a less optimal site farther to the north. While the report says a split yard arrangement using multiple sites is not desirable, no quantitative justification or evidence is provided to support this conclusion. The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to discuss this option. Economic impacts of a split facility should be addressed and compared to the operating

L-047.126

Comments of Weaver's Cove Energy on South Coast Rail Project

DEIR- EEA File #1434

DEIR - USACE Regulatory File No. NAE-2007-00698

One New Street, Fall River, MA 02720  
phone 774-488-3900, fax 508.675.9473  
[www.weaverscove.com](http://www.weaverscove.com)

Page 29 of 35

improvements achieved by having some of the trains stored overnight in what the report describes as an ideal location that is simply a bit too small to house all of the trains. The uses of the land surrounding the small site should be described – the properties should be depicted on an appropriately scaled map. Much of the commentary and conclusions drawn in the report in Appendix 3.2-E would be clearer if maps were include showing the properties in question and the location of the facilities in questions. These maps should have labels that tie the visuals to the text.

L-047.126

**Comment 117.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E should discuss:

1. the amount of parking required,
  2. the size of the maintenance shop,
  3. the activities that will take place in the maintenance shop,
  4. the amount of storage space required for maintenance equipment,
  5. the hazardous and petroleum products that must be stored on the site and the volume of those materials stored.
  6. etc.
- L-047.127

**Comment 118.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E states that the amount of site grading is a significant issue to be considered in evaluating alternative sites. To address this issue in a quantitative fashion, a map with site contours should be provided for each of the alternatives considered. The amount of filling and cutting should be estimated and rough cost estimates for this work provided as part of the capital cost estimating effort that will identify the relative capital cost of constructing and operating one facility at each of the locations listed in the report.

L-047.128

This analysis should include an estimate of the cost of building site access roads – some sites were dismissed because of the length of the access roadway – and the estimated cost of building the roadway and gaining access to the site. Using logic one might conclude that a parcel that requires a long access road would cost much less to acquire than a parcel that has easy access to public roadways. If the cost of a roadway is going to be used to dismiss a site, the cost of acquiring that site should be taken into account as well. Similarly, Site 4A is laid out on railway owned property yet was dismissed due to grading and the long length of a site access road. If less land has to be acquired to site the yard, the land acquisition cost for that option should be lower. This could in turn save funds that could then be used to do the required grading. The cost of acquiring property to develop the other sites should be compared to the cost of the roadway and the cost of the grading. To contemplate site selection a complete set of economic factors need to be considered – a limited subset of factors will lead to improper site selection. From an economic point of view, a site that is isolated and requires a long roadway should cost less to acquire than a site with ready access to the public road system. In an efficient market the price of the property will be influenced by the cost of building a roadway into the property. The layover site alternatives analysis should be expanded to more comprehensively address the economic and revenue advantages and disadvantages of one site over another. Such an analysis should address capital, operating, and development costs as part of the site evaluation/comparison process.

**Comment 119.**

The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E states that Site #5 (ISP) for the Fall River lateral should pass the preliminary screening and be included among the three Fall River based alternatives meriting further study. At the same time the report states that this site requires major grading work and has a long access road. The very same report states that site 4A (Somerset Junction, Fall River) is being rejected because it requires major site grading and has a long access road. The DEIS/DEIR rejects or accepts sites for further study based on economic considerations relating to development costs. Since this is the case, the DEIS/DEIR should include an economic evaluation of all the significant economic factors driving site selection. This involves estimating costs in a consistent fashion. The current screening process does not appear to be based on economic and engineering

L-047.129



estimates – it appears to be arbitrary. The site selection process demands a quantitative analysis based on engineering facts and cost estimating principles.

L-047.129

**Comment 120.**

MEPA and NEPA are processes that are supposed to garner public input. WCE in a letter written to the USACE and MDOT has questioned whether or not adequate public input has been secured in the alternatives study of the layover yards. MDOT has directly responded to these concerns in a letter dated 3/25/2010 with a copy to the USACE. In this letter MDOT stated:

L-047.130

*“There is no requirement to notify abutters and the [MDOT] team does not do so directly until there is a preferred alternative, which is not yet the case for South Coast Rail.”*

The DEIS/DEIR has now been issued and there is no preferred alternative for the overnight yards and not a single listed site has been identified as a candidate for the midday layover facilities. Before the comment period closes on the DEIS/DEIR, the abutters to each of the overnight rail yard locations should be sent a letter requesting their input. The comment period should be extended until such time as they have had an opportunity to comment.

**Comment 121.**

Only one or two abutters to the WCE East layover facility site appear to be aware that our property is being considered for a layover yard – and then only because Weaver’s Cove has informed them. Most nearby landowners remain unaware that our site may host an overnight train yard. Public input is essential to a thorough rail yard siting process. The comment period should be held open until such time as abutters to our property are formally notified in writing and provided an opportunity to comment. WCE requests that property owners within 1,500 yards of the boundaries of the layover yard sites as well as those with direct visual views be sent a written notification clearly stating that our site is being considered for an overnight yard.

L-047.131

**Comment 122.**

The DEIS/DEIR should commission a study to determine what impact a rail layover yard will have on the value and insurance costs of neighboring properties.

L-047.132

**Comment 123.**

At the open house held in Fall River, the South Coast Rail development team verbally explained that potential sites for the yard in Fall River, near the train station, were eliminated from consideration at the request of the Mayor Correia. The DEIS/DEIR should identify the locations of the sites in Fall River that were “eliminated” from consideration at the Mayor’s request (or at the request of any other political figure). The DEIS/DEIR should include a map of the area near the Fall River Battleship Cove Station that identifies all of landholdings of the City of Fall River and landholdings of other Government agencies with parcel boundaries and ownership shown. The DEIS should document whether or not these sites were considered as part of a layover yard site selection process and if they were dismissed should provide supporting environmental and economic data to support their dismissal.

L-047.133

The DEIS/DEIR should describe the justification for dropping sites off the list at the request of the Mayor. The DEIS/DIR should identify the regulatory authority under which the Mayor of Fall River has the right to remove from consideration overnight yard locations within the City of Fall River. The DEIS/DEIR should describe under what authority the Mayor can exercise veto power over the site selection process. The DEIS/DEIR should describe what other officials have made such requests, when they were made, and how they were handled.

**Comment 124.**

If owners of the overnight yard and midday layover facilities are not willing to sell their land, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the project will gain title to the land. The specific steps involved should be described along with the scheduling of those steps. L-047.134

**Comment 125.**

The DEIS should describe whether or not a reserve funding account will be set aside to guarantee that funding is available to dismantle the overnight yard and restore it to the before build condition should the yard cease to be used for public transportation purposes at some time in the future. The DEIS/DEIR should describe who will pay to restore the layover yard to its original condition. Will a bond be required to ensure restoration of the site at the end of its useful life? L-047.135

**Comment 126.**

The DEIS/DEIR should address the construction schedule and sequence of construction activities that will be undertaken during the construction of the overnight yard. Construction impacts can only be assessed if a construction plan is provided. L-047.136

**Comment 127.**

The DEIS/DEIR should identify the storm water controls that will be required if the overnight yard is built on the WCE's East or West sites. How will the project ensure that these controls satisfy the requirements of the Wild and Scenic River Act? L-047.137

**Comment 128.**

The DEIS/DEIR should explain how the construction activities and permanent structures associated with the in-water aspects of the project will impact the free flowing characteristics of the Taunton River as defined under the Wild and Scenic River act. If the flow of the river will be changed, how will compliance with the act be ensured? L-047.138

**Comment 129.**

The DEIS/DEIR should describe what the cumulative construction impacts will be if the South Coast Rail project and WCE LNG project are both built at the same time. L-047.139

**Comment 130.**

The DEIS/DEIR should describe the deep foundations that must be installed during the construction of the overnight yard. If these foundations might impact historical contamination at proposed overnight yard locations, the methods of dealing with this contamination should be described. A similar analysis should be completed for all passenger station locations. L-047.140

**Comment 131.**

A number of trucks will deliver and remove materials from the Project area during construction and during operation. The DEIS/DEIR should describe the number and timing of these trucking operations. Air quality, noise, and traffic impacts from these trucking operations should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.141

**Comment 132.**

The DEIS/DEIR should explain how contaminated soils will be handled if encountered during the construction of the overnight yard. If soils will be removed offsite, the DEIS/DEIR should identify disposed sites. The DEIS/DEIR should describe whether or not contaminated soils will remain on the site or will they be removed from the site? If they remain on the site, the methods used to handling the soils should be described. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how contaminated soil handing procedures will comply with regulatory requirements and any restriction imposed as a result of deed restrictions. The methods used for monitoring. And, if required, how will the movements of these soils be monitored to ensure the contamination does not spread? L-047.142

**Comment 133.**

Rail facilities are known for their contribution of petroleum products, fuel, and waste oil to soil and groundwater. The DEIS/DEIR should explain how storm water from the rail yards be handled and how the interests of adjacent landowners will be protected as oil can migrate from one property to another. L-047.143

**Comment 134.**

The DEIS/DEIR should identify what material will be used for the ties associated with track construction. Creosote has been identified as a potent environmental pollutant. If pressure treated wood will be used, how will the impact of the treatment chemicals on the ground water be modeled and monitored? L-047.144

**Comment 135.**

The DEIS/DEIR should identify provisions that will be made to clean up spills of raw sewage as it is transferred from the passenger cars or leaks at a station or along the commuter rail route. The responsibility of South Coast Rail to provide spill response equipment should be discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.145

**Comment 136.**

The DEIR/DEIS should address studies that have been performed to investigate the effects of electro-magnetic fields on the neighboring homes, schools and businesses or the Mill River high pressure natural gas pipelines which will run along the track and will include cathodic protection systems. L-047.146

**Comment 137.**

The DEIS/DEIR should address odor issues. Will any odors emanate from the layover facility? What about the sewage on the trains? Will this sewage be stored at the site and trucked offsite? Where will the sewage be processed? How will odors be controlled? L-047.147

**Comment 138.**

The DEIS/DEIR should clarify if the project proponent proposes to indemnify the property owners and other potentially responsible parties from any and all environmental impacts, direct and indirect, that the project could have on the existing and proposed environmental conditions at lands taken to develop the Project. L-047.148

**Comment 139.**

The DEIS/DEIR should address soil conditions along Project lands. The transmission of vibrations through soils is highly dependant on the nature of the soils and rock between the rail yard and sensitive receptors. The nature of the soils and depth to bedrock should be investigated. L-047.149

**Comment 140.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss wetland mitigation plans. If mitigation is required, the commitment of the project to monitoring programs should be detailed as well as the project's plans to ensure the long term survival of replicated areas is assured over time. The commitment of the project to replace mitigation areas that do not survive over the long term should be discussed. The commitment of the project to take corrective actions should mitigation fail should be discussed. L-047.150

**Comment 141.**

Given that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has determined that passenger rail systems are vulnerable to terrorist attacks and in light of the terrorist attacks on mass transit systems (i.e. Madrid, London, Mumbai), the DEIS/DEIR should outline precautions that will be taken to protect the layover yard and the rail line from terrorist attacks. The agencies that will be involved in developing the appropriate security plans should be listed and their role described. Providing security for the rail facilities will be costly. How will these additional funds be secured? Will local municipalities be required to fund the necessary security measures? The funding of security resources that are provided by the local community should be discussed. Payments for equipment, training, overtime and other expenses should be enumerated in the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.151



**Comment 142.**

Train facilities have a documented history of terrorist attacks. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the type of response plans that will be required to manage such an emergency. Evacuation plans should be documented. The local agencies and resource that will be available to respond to the plan should be described. L-047.152

**Comment 143.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss how the Project will demonstrate compliance with noise standards through the execution of testing program after the facility is in operation. The criteria that must be met should be described. If the noise standards are not met, the corrective actions that will be taken to bring the project into compliance should be described in the DEIS/DEIR. L-047.153

**Comment 144.**

The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the electrical requirements to support the operation of the overnight yard (as well as other Project Elements). The environmental impacts associated with installing this electrical capacity should be detailed. The noise of the transformers should be documented and the oil used in the transformers described. The type of spill containment around the transformers should also be described. If the transformers have cooling fans installed, the noise level of the fans and impacts on nearby receptors should be described. The type of fire suppression systems that will be put in place should also be documented. L-047.154

**Comment 145.**

The DEIS/DEIR should identify and describe the potentially hazardous and flammable materials that will be stored and used at a typical rail yard. The location where the diesel fueled trains will be refueled should be discussed and the amount of diesel fuel stored on the site should be discussed. The trucking activities (or will they be filled by pipeline) associated with the refilling of these tanks should be described. Measures that will be taken in the event hazardous or flammable materials are spilled should be discussed. L-047.155

**Comment 146.**

The DEIS/DEIR should describe how spilled petroleum products will be cleaned up and how the response will be coordinated with prior landowners if the site is already contaminated with similar materials. L-047.156

**Comment 147.**

The use of diesel fueled trains is considered in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss where the fueling of the trains will take place. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how much fuel will stored at the refueling station. The diesel fuel storage tanks and spill control equipment should be described (footprint, diameter, height). How will stormwater drainage systems be separated form oil spill containment sumps? Safety equipment associated with the diesel refueling station should be described in the DEIS/DEIR. The type of firefighting capacity needed should be described in the DEIS/DEIR? L-047.157

**Comment 148.**

Diesel fuel will need to be transported from a source of supply to the train fueling facilities discussed in the comments above. How will the diesel fuel be delivered to the train fueling facility? The DEIS/DEIR should describe approximately how many trucks will be required and what route will they travel. The time of day that deliveries of oil will be accepted should be described as well as the air, noise, and traffic impact of these facilities. L-047.158

**Comment 149.**

A significant amount of electricity is required to run electrified trains. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss where this power will come from and how it will be delivered to the overhead wires. Transformer yards can be unsightly and can consume significant amount of real estate. The DEIS/DEIR should describe where the transformer facilities will be located and a drawing should be prepared to show where all the electric delivery facilities will be located. L-047.159

**Comment 150.**

Upon receiving a hard copy of the DEIS, WCE also received a brochure titled, "South Coast Rail: A Reader's Guide to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report". The brochure, published by Mass DOT and dated March 2011, is clearly intended to provide summary data to the public. This continues a long trend of such public relations documents. The brochure fails to reference any of the proposed layover facility locations yet includes a map that clearly shows the rail stations and track routes. All future documents (including brochures and permit applications) should clearly identify layover facility locations in detail equivalent to that provided for station and track locations.

L-047.160

# Individuals

<b>Page</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>
1	Acheson	Elizabeth
3	Ailes	Melinda
5	Almquist-Olsen	Priscilla
7	Amaral	Ken
8	Anzivino	Barbara
16	Bachman	Glenn
17	Barney	Peter
19	Barros	Christopher
21	Bass	Sue
23	Beal	Richard
25	Bullard	John
27	Castellina	Stephen
28	Chaffin	David
29	Chisholm	Jim
30	Cienniwa	Paul
31	Davis	Steven
33	De Souza	Marianne
34	Deschenes	Peter
35	Dhooge	Lynn
37	Dion	Nicole
38	Dreyer, Jr.	Frederic
41	Edson	Erik
43	Felago	Roseanne
44	Fellone	Joe
45	Fitzpatrick	Paul
50	Ford	Stephen
52	Fox	Jean
53	Fried	Bobbi
54	Fried-Hardy	Aimee
55	Garies	Joseph
56	Gitto	Louis
78	Golden	Mary
79	Goldrick	David
80	Gonzalez	Guillermo
82	Grubb	Linda
85	Hanawalt	Wendy
86	Hardy	David
87	Heald	Candace
88	Heino	Gilbert
89	Herbert	Jim
90	Johnson	Alan
91	Jolliffe	Michael
97	LeBlanc	Jane
98	LeBlanc	Michael
99	Lewis	Heather and Doug
104	Lindwall	Forrest



106	Linhares	Patti
108	Litchfield	Leon
110	Lopes	Antoinette
114	Malley	John
115	Malloy	John
117	Maltby	Trent
118	Martin	S.
119	Marum	Eileen
128	Mathes	James
130	Mazzuca	Michael
131	McDonald	Gerald
135	McSweeny	Lynne
138	Mendillo	Robert
160	Michaud	Donald
163	Morse	William
164	Mullen	Robert
167	Nadeau	Pauline
170	Palmieri	Linda
171	Paquette	Dennis
172	Paré	Daniel
173	Paull, Jr	Peter
174	Petitti	Ken
175	Pezzella	William
176	Plante	Susan
177	Reardon	Brian
178	Reardon	Jennifer
179	Rice	Curt
180	Richwine	Dave
181	Romero	Kathy
183	Roy	T.K.
184	Roy	Tricia
185	Shibli	Abdul
186	Stanton	James
187	Stevens	Eric
189	Sull	S.
190	Sullivan	Joan
191	Swanson	Allen
192	Taylor	Grant
193	Taylor	Victoria
194	Turley	Rebecca
196	Ural	Erdem
215	Van Dyke	Wendy
217	Voci	Catherine
219	Weber II	Joel
223	Wilkinson	Steven
224	Zehntner	Rosemary

Date 25 May 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil  
fax: 978-318-8303

MAY 27 '11 REG DIV

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery.

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

Thank you so much for moving along the  
southeastern rail line project to connect Boston  
to New Bedford & for Fall River.

I'm in my 80's, so I do not drive into  
town on my own very often - probably not again.  
The size of my age group is increasing. There-  
fore, the number of people from the Southeast who  
depend on Boston for their entertainment, financial  
guidance, and medical care is diminishing.  
We can't get there!

L-046.01

It's sad for us who enjoyed being in Boston and

(over)

can no longer travel there easily. We need  
trains to get us into town and back.

L-046.01

I wish you success in your efforts  
to "re-train" us. (Many of us remember riding  
the train into town in pre-WWII days.)

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Acheson

100 Village Way, Apt 107

Westport, MA 02790

<betsyall@yahoo.com>

I support public transportation. It's so  
much more economical & protects (especially electric  
trains!) our environment!

L-046.02

Elizabeth Acheson

Elizabeth Acheson

Signature

Elizabeth Acheson

PRINT Name

100 Village Way, Apt 107

Address

Westport, MA 02790



**From:** Melinda Ailes [mlailes@msbdc.umass.edu]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 07, 2011 7:58 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** Support for SouthCoast Rail - Stoughton Alternative re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
 May 7, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
 US Army Corps of Engineers  
 696 Virginia Road  
 Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
 Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
 Boston, MA 02114

RE: SouthCoast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Report

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I am writing to express my strong support for bringing commuter rail to Southeastern MA through the Stoughton "electric" alternative. The Stoughton alternative should be selected because it was identified by the Army Corp. of Engineers as having the least environmentally damaging impact.

E-024.01

As both a citizen of Southeastern Massachusetts and an employee of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Southeast Regional Office, I see the profound impact that commuter rail will make on our region's future economic success. At the same time, I recognize that our region's lack of rail is a significant determinant in restricting our ability to attract quality businesses and employees. We have studied the positive effects of commuter rail for too many years and it is now time to act.

As you are well aware, this region of the state has one of the state's highest unemployment rates – as well as being one of few areas of growing population. Bringing commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford would do at least three positive things. It will allow workers a wider range of employment options by expanding their geographic reach. Second, it will attract business development since employers will have access to a broader pool of employees in a region with lower operating costs and high quality of life attributes. Third it will allow more regional mobility. The economic ripple effect from lower unemployment and new business investment will in turn bolster housing growth and revitalization of these inner cities and neighborhoods.

E-024.02

I believe that it is critically important to vigorously support this SouthCoast Rail project.

Very truly yours,

*Melinda L. Ailes*

**Melinda L. Ailes**  
**17 Grand View Avenue**  
**Mattapoisett, MA 02739**

**508-758-3417**  
**mlailes@msbdc.umass.edu**

Melinda Ailes  
Regional Director  
MA Small Business Development Center  
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200 Pocasset Street  
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"Your Success is Our Business"

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PRISCILLA ALMQUIST-OLSEN, ESQ.  
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(508) 238-6577 or (508) 272-3121  
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May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: SOUTH COAST RAIL DEIS/DEIR

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

Please be advised that I am writing in reference to the above-captioned matter. I oppose the Stoughton – Easton – Fall River – New Bedford rail alternative for the following reasons:

1. THE RAIL PROJECT IS A BOONDOGGLE. The cost is astronomical in contrast to the small group of riders it would serve. Overall cost is estimated at \$2 billion today which will rise to \$4 billion with the usual cost over-runs at the time of construction. The ridership envisioned is but a vision and a hope. When a bus route was proposed in the recent past, the proponents could not justify it: insufficient number of riders making the trek into Boston. What will change? Will the educated pool of riders for those Boston jobs change? Will riders who are qualified for Boston jobs want to endure a 3-hour round trip every day and deprive their families of their presence? The obvious answer is “NO” to both questions. If the goal is to raise the socio-economic level of Fall River and New Bedford residents, put the money into economic development in those communities so that they can prosper and their citizenry can find employment close to home.
2. THE RAIL PROJECT IS HAZARDOUS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TO THE HEALTH, WELFARE, AND WELLBEING OF EASTON RESIDENTS. The train cutting through the environmentally sensitive Hocomock Swamp will wreak havoc and destruction on habitat, wildlife, and the filtering of toxins. The train will adversely impact Town of Easton municipal wells and threaten our drinking water. The train's barreling through North Easton's Historic District will

L-058.01

L-058.02



endanger the stability and edifices of many unique and one-of-a-kind internationally regarded Henry Hobson Richardson buildings. It will interrupt the many residents' (some of whom are a mere 25 feet from the tracks) sleep at 5:30 a.m. with the blaring whistle of the first commuter train. The 37 daily trips will cause enormous and detrimental harm to the health and well-being of Easton residents. There are many seniors (including Housing for the Elderly) along the route who are already battling with insomnia and don't need this additional insult to their environment or to their health.

L-058.02

3. THE RAIL PROJECT CUTS THROUGH THE VERY HEART AND CENTER OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES: POLICE, FIRE, AND AMBULANCE.

L-058.03

I support the bus alternate for the following reasons:

1. The buses can be run on natural gas and other gasoline alternatives and will be more environmentally friendly than the train.
2. The bus trip is faster and can be easily accessed on the street, thus avoiding the cost of constructing bus stations.
3. No costly infrastructure except the designated lane is needed e.g. tracks, bus stations, etc.
4. The bus route can shift in the future with the shift in population whereas the train infrastructure will be a permanent environmental blight. The rail bed would be better served by converting it into bike and walking paths as many communities have done e.g. Orange County, New York.

L-058.04

For all the foregoing I respectfully request that the South Coast Rail Project be wisely scuttled in favor of the bus alternative or better yet no alternative until such time as the numbers warrant such a costly expenditure of taxpayer's monies.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Almquist-Olsen

---

**From:** KEAma ral@aol.com

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2011 8:21 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** Good choice

I think your decision to use the land at the Checkbook and Pine Swamps in Easton and Raynham to support a railway between Boston, Freetown and Fall River is great. I have recently returned from Alaska where I rode the train to Denali and saw little if and adverse effects on wildlife.  
Best Wishes;

E-038.01

Ken

May 25, 2011

Alan Anacheke -Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr Anacheke-Nasemann,

The MassDot is asking for a waiver of the wetlands protection act by claiming it is for the common good.

They are arguing the economic development of the south coast region can only be gained by transit-oriented development. This reasoning is flawed and therefore the waivers should not be given for the following reasons.

1. Commuter rail has not delivered on this promise not only on the lines already constructed in Massachusetts but in other parts of the country. L-059.01
  - a) Denver's Regional Transportation District has made a mess of the multibillion-dollar, tax-funded project, making promises it couldn't keep and offering estimates that have been dramatically flawed.
  - b) Stoughton already has a commuter rail station. The economic development in this area has not occurred. (See photo's)
  - c) North Easton station site has considerable development without the need for a train station. (See attached photo's)
  - d) Easton center train station site has the shovel shop, which already has a planned housing and retail development planned again with out the need for the train coming through. (See photo's and attached pdf of the final shovel shop)
2. The economic information submitted to the army corps section 4 fails to emphasize the failure of development is mostly due to the lack of water and sewer. L-059.02
  - a. Stoughton achieved rapid growth only after joining the MWRA.
  - b. The town of Easton will not achieve the economic growth argued in the document until water and sewage needs are met. Projects can only be built within the current water and sewage limits. Notice from town web page (**Water Restrictions:** The Water Department would like to remind residents that currently Phase II is in effect. Phase II restricts water on an even/odd address basis.)
3. The amount of congestion it can relieve, at the rosiest estimate, would be only marginal. L-059.03



- a. The corps should fully re-examine the realities of the metro area's vast geography, its real-world travel patterns, our addiction to the automobile and the failure of fixed rail lines to significantly reduce congestion on our roadways.
- b. **The Federal rail highway advises against at grade crossings yet the south coast rail includes many of these** Given the at-grade crossings proposed by the full build-out of south Coast rail (and not including the existing lines), and the frequent train schedules, an opportunity exists for massive traffic snarls.
- c. Minneapolis, a federal transit review found that poorly planned traffic-signal systems subjected drivers to long and unnecessary waits. Some drivers reported commute times that doubled. The federal study found that the problem could never be corrected, meaning the rail line's congestion-relieving benefits were negated by the problems the grade crossings caused for drivers.
- d. The corps should demand that Massachusetts prove that the at-grade crossings won't be an issue. At a meeting for station planning for the North Easton station Comments were recorded about current traffic issues in this area. The plan is for a 500-car parking lot. To illustrate the lack of understanding of the situation the South Coast rail will have two roads existing the parking lot but both feeding unto the same road (rt 138) Currently a Supermarket and office building already exit on to this road creating 20 minute back ups during the evening rush hour. There will be only 3 rush hour trains and at full capacity of the parking lot and assuming some drop off and pick ups, one can conservatively estimate the increase number of vehicles to be 100 per train. If 10 cars can go through the traffic light per cycle then you are increasing the cycles by 10. This traffic will further jam 138 increasing tie ups at lights and intersections further along this route negating much of the CO<sub>2</sub> reductions gains.
- e. The above argument can be repeated at each and every stop.
- f. Frequent trips over long distances tend to dramatically dilute ridership per mile. Less riders per mile means more carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere, as diesel is a fossil fuel, and the electrical grid is mostly powered by fossil fuels.
- g. Most passenger cars already emit less CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger mile than an equivalent use of commuter rail. Because the cars are becoming more fuel-efficient so quickly, the divide will only continue to grow.

4. The fanciful assertions about job creation are up for debate.

L-059.04

5. Noise pollution

- a. Currently the trains pulling into Stoughton Station blow their whistles. The town hall is located near this station. The noise from the train whistles causes meeting in the great Hall to be stopped because people cannot hear. This will increase as the number of trains increase. It is interesting to note the Stoughton station area is not mentioned on the table 4.6-5.
- b. There is a theater within 1000 feet of the tracks in Stoughton Center. Currently there is an effort to restore the theater to it's original State. No mention of this theater appears in the report yet will be directly impacted by the noise trains especially the whistles.
- c. The number of crossing in the town Stoughton vs. the distance and the Swift act will cause the trains' whistles to be blown almost continuous from the time the train hits the border until it leaves. I live two miles from the station and am disturbed by the train whistles now. It will only get worse.
- d. The towns with the least to gain will be impacted the most. Please note the diesel Alternative will have less severe impacts as seen in Table 4.6- 21 and Table 4.6 -20
- e. The Diesel alternative also will have less impacts during the constructions period as shown in Table 4.6-30
- f. It is interesting the state is willing to spend 1.4 Billion dollars on a train but when it comes to helping people who are directly impacted and getting no benefit they are limiting what they will spend. It should also be noted the \$5000 seemed arbitrary and not based on current construction cost.

L-059.05

6. Then you can throw in the certainties of a government-sponsored project costing more than estimated, taking longer to build and underperforming the revenue projections. The Massachusetts commuter rail rose 43% from fiscal 2001 to 2008, a \$74.5 million increase as the railroad's operator was asked to open a new line and expand service on 3 others. The Massachusetts transit system is unable to keep pace with cost inflation and falling dangerously behind on repairs needed to keep passengers safe. The cost of the project is not in the public good and the cost to maintain it is also not in the common good.

L-059.06

Arguing the wetlands protection act should be waived because the project is for the common good is not valid. One group of People cannot be valued over another group of people. Massachusetts often seems more preoccupied With politics — most obviously, placating mayors from the cities of New Bedford a Fall River, and Taunton who want to ensure their rail line is built. The wetlands protection act serves all the People. Waivers should not be given lightly and should not be given simply for political reason. The argument for the common good should include all the people not just the “group of the hour”. Further more the greatest harm to the environment is in the towns that have the least to gain.

L-059.07

Yes, rail lines are sleek and attractive. But besides being pricey to install, they are pricey to maintain, and other alternatives exist that would clear clogged roadways (and the air) at least as effectively, if not more so.

Please turn down the request to waive the Wetland protection act and the South Coast Rail Project. It is not for common good since the supposed economic growth is not supported by facts, nor is the improvement to the environment but instead this project will destroy wetlands solely for political aims as confirmed at public hearings by speeches by politicians from towns who want the rails and from politicians who want the train as long as it isn't going through their towns.

I also was disappointed in the fact that only 2 public hearings were held on a billion dollar project yet none of the public hearings were in the towns the had the most to lose, Easton, Raynham, and Stoughton.

L-059.08

Finally all of these impacts will be exacerbated if this track also includes freight.

L-059.09

Barbara Anzivino  
25 Ross Ave  
Stoughton Ma 02072  
Precinct 4 Town meeting Representative



Photo's to go with letter Barbara Anzivino

The current train station does not bring in development in Stoughton

This is one of the many vacant stores located near the current train station



This is a picture empty store fronts and the theater. There is currently a group raising money to restore the historic Theater. The noise from the trains will affect concerts and performances' in the future as the train tracks are located within 500 feet. The whistles will blow as they approach the station and then again as they leave. The trains not stopping at the station will also blow their whistles as they approach the intersections through the town.



Office park already constructed near North Easton Station picture 1



Building 2



It appears a future train will not enhance development in this area by much. The current wait to exit this parking lot onto route 138 at evening rush hour is sometimes as long as 20 minutes. The second office building is built but not occupied. The third is under construction. What will a 500 car parking lot do to the traffic in this area.?

L-059.10

This is the strip Mall already built where the North Easton Station will go .



Waste water treatment for the shopping center site of the North Easton Station





Train station for Easton Center



The picture below is the proposed shovelshop development. It didn't need a train to get going. The economic impacts are over exaggerated.



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**From:** Glenn Bachman [glenn@ravenbusiness.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2011 3:09 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** <no subject>

Alan,

Can you please tell me the close of comment period date for the south coast rail project. Many thanks. glenn | E-029.01



*City of New Bedford*  
*Massachusetts*

**ASSESSING DEPARTMENT**

Peter S. Barney  
Administrative Assistant  
To The Board of Assessors

**THE FOLLOWING IS A TELECOPY MESSAGE FOR:**

ALAN ANACHEKA - NASEMANN

**FROM:** PSB

**DATE:** 5/2/11 **TIME:** 2 PM

**TOTAL PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET:** 2

**MESSAGES & COMMENTS:**

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH COAST  
RAIL.

MAY 2 2011 REG DIV



567 Rockdale Ave  
New Bedford, MA. 02740  
May 2, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA. 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann :

I am writing this letter in support of bringing passenger rail service in addition to upgraded freight service to New Bedford and Fall River.

When the railroads were first built New Bedford had one of the earliest connecting lines to Boston which followed the economic expansion of the South Coast region. Today, this area of the state has been disenfranchised from the possibilities of job creation and rapid transportation which was available as late as the mid-1950's from New Bedford to Boston.

New Bedford's expanding economy, especially with the coming wind turbine project, requires the upgrade of the existing track for faster freight service, but we also need to be connected for passenger service both to and from Boston so that our citizens can avoid the long traffic delays on Route 24 to get to job opportunities in Boston.

F-001.01

The Stoughton route offers the most direct and fastest connection to Boston from Fall River and New Bedford.

Since a total rebuild of the raised right-of-way in New Bedford with its old railroad bridges is under way, a major step has been taken to prepare for expanded freight service, and with the possibilities of coming passenger trains.

This project should be speeded up as fast as possible, so the cities of New Bedford and Fall River can fully join in the economic expansion of the eastern Massachusetts metropolitan area.

Sincerely,



Peter S. Barney

Cc: Kristina Egan

MAY 2 2011 REC DIV

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**From:** Christopher Barros [kaleeki6905@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 1:06 PM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** MY FEELINGS ABOUT THE SOUTHCOAST RAIL PROJECT

DEAR MR. ALAN ANACHKA-NASMANN: I fully support the article that was run in our local newspaper (the Standard Times) today, May 27th, 2011 on page A4. It was written by Dr. T. K. Roy, Professor Emeritus @ UMASS Dartmouth. Everything he wrote about our future here in the Southcoast for rail transportation Most notable in Professor Roy's article was the fact that the rail completion..."will save millions of gallons of gasoline yearly used CURRENTLY in traffick back and forth to Boston, REDUCING pollution and dependence and foreign oil." I have the development site as well monitor the ongoings on the projects website. As an environmentalist, I know our CHILDREN deserve a clean, bright and prosperous future. We owe to them. Future generations of this whole region, sir, will be looking to you. Thankyou for your time and your consideration pertaining this matter.

E-057.01

Mayoral Candidate for the City of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

U.S. Army Sergeant (Ret.) Christopher John Barros

Combat Veteran

Disabled American Veteran

861 Tradewind Street, New Bedford, MA 02740-1852.

P.S. At the time of this letter, I have still not pulled nomination papers for office.

**From:** Christopher Barros [kaleeki6905@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 1:18 PM  
**To:** O'Shea, Aisling (EEA)  
**Subject:** Secretary Sullivan, sir.....

Dear Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. :

Sir, our local newspaper ran an article today that I hope you have taken into strong consideration for the future welfare of we South Coast residents. Our commuter rail project will..."save millions of gallons of gasoline yearly used currently in traffic back and forth to Boston, REDUCING pollution and dependence on foreign oil." This is one quotation from the writer of today's article, Professor Emeritus Dr. T.K. Roy of UMASS Dartmouth. Actually, everything that was written in this article...."Comment today on South Coast Rail Project", I am in FULL agreement. It is logical and pertinent the future generatinos of this whole region. Thankyou for your time...and your consideration to this matter. Sincerely,

Mayoral Candidate for the City of New Bedford,

## Massachusetts

U.S. Army Sergeant (Ret.) Christopher John Barros  
Combat Veteran                      Disabled American

Veteran



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**From:** Sue Bass [henrysuebass@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2011 4:54 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us; Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Cc:** Heidi Ricci; Julia Blatt  
**Subject:** Re: Missing words in South Coast Rail filing

Sorry for a false alarm. Apparently this was a computer problem. I downloaded the Wetlands chapter again and all the words were there.

Sue Bass

On Tue, May 17, 2011 at 11:32 AM, Sue Bass <[henrysuebass@gmail.com](mailto:henrysuebass@gmail.com)> wrote:

I hadn't gotten very far in reading the Wetlands section of the South Coast Rail EIR/EIS (which is the section where I started) before I started finding gaps in the text.

E-039.01

For example, on the first page, in section 4.16.1.1 RESOURCE DEFINITION, at least part of one sentence is missing. The text reads, "Under Massac [a line and a half of blank space] marshes, swamps, bogs, areas where groundwater, flowing or standing surface water or ice provide"

The very next section, REGULATORY CONTEXT, has a similar gap: "Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires a Department of the Army permit for the discharge of [long blank followed by the superscript 2] including adjacent wetlands."

I don't know how this happened or how common it is in the text, but it is serious. While I can mentally fill in references to such things as the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, I have no way of knowing what else was omitted. After fixing all the errors, I suggest you re-notice this and extend the comment period.

Cordially,

Sue Bass  
530 Concord Ave  
Belmont MA 02478  
[617 489 4729](tel:6174894729)

# Sue Bass

530 CONCORD AVENUE, BELMONT, MA 02478  
617 489 4729 • E-MAIL: [HENRYSUEBASS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HENRYSUEBASS@GMAIL.COM)

May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Project Manager  
Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

[screis@usace.army.mil](mailto:screis@usace.army.mil)

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA)  
Attn: Aisling O'Shea, MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

[aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

Dear folks,

I write to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (NAE2007-00698) and Report (EOEEA 14346) on the proposed South Coast Rail project.

Although I'm a supporter of rail transportation, I must oppose South Coast Rail, at least using the route the proponents have selected. When Governor Patrick and others made a campaign promise to push it through, they were probably ignorant of the enormous cost per rider and the enormous environmental price it would impose. This project does not make sense on either ground.

Purely on environmental grounds, to slice through the state's largest freshwater wetland, the Hockomock Swamp, is absurd. Though a track did once run through the swamp, the rails have long since been removed; the scar they left is nearly erased. Constructing a new track would mean bulldozing many thousands of trees and wetlands. At least 12 acres of wetlands would be directly altered by this project, and more would be affected. Sixty-six streams would be crossed, on average about twice each. This is a lot of environmental "alteration."

In *The Song of the Dodo*, David Quammen describes cutting a fine Persian carpet into "Thirty-Six Persian Throw Rugs." Each one is worth much less than 1/36<sup>th</sup> of the original carpet. Similarly, chopping up the Hockomock into smaller pieces will devastate the entire swamp. Do not do this.

Cordially,

*Sue Bass*

L-060.01

MAY 14, 2011

FROM: RICHARD A. BEAL

10 BEECH TREE LANE

SOUTH EASTON, MA 02375-1520

PHONE: 508-238-2175

TO: ALAN ANACHEKA-NASEMANN

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

696 VIRGINIA ROAD

CONCORD, MA 01742-2751

SUBJECT: STOUGHTON ALTERNATIVE

CONCERN: DEPOT ST. AND PURCHASE ST. GRADE CROSSINGS IN THE  
"SOUTH" EASTON SECTION OF TOWN

BECAUSE OF THE SHORT DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO GRADE CROSSINGS ( $\frac{1}{4}$  MILE) BOTH THE NORTH AND SOUTH BOUND TRAINS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SOUND THEIR HORN FOR  $\frac{1}{2}$  MILE IN BOTH DIRECTIONS WHICH MEANS THOSE LIVING IN THIS AREA WILL RECEIVE TWICE A LONG HORN BLASTS AS OTHER GRADE CROSSINGS IN TOWN.

L-028.01

ALSO THE SHORT ST. GRADE CROSSING IS LESS THAN  $\frac{1}{2}$  MILE NORTH OF DEPOT ST. AND PROSPECT ST. GRADE IS ABOUT  $\frac{3}{4}$  MILE SOUTH OF PURCHASE ST., WHICH MEANS FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES WITH TRAINS SCHEDULED EVERY 22 MINUTES BETWEEN THE



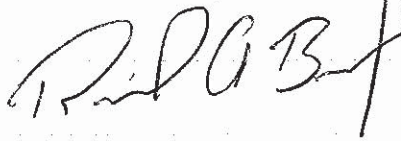
HOURS OF 7AM AND 10PM AND GOING 70MPH, THE HORN WILL BLOW ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY THRU THE SOUTH EASTON SECTION OF TOWN. TO ME AND MY NEIGHBORS THIS IS A QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUE AND IS "UNACCEPTABLE."

L-028.01

THE SOLUTION IS OBVIOUS. THE TRAIN HORN SHOULD NOT BE BLOWN IN THIS AREA OF TOWN. THE GRADE CROSSINGS SHOULD HAVE DOUBLE WIDE GATES WITH LIGHTS AND BELLS WITH FENCES SO NO VEHICLES OR PEDESTRIANS CAN CROSS UNTIL THE TRAIN HAS PASSED,

"COMMON SENSE SHOULD APPLY"

SINCERELY,



RICHARD A. BEAL

COPY TO TOWN OF EASTON SELECTMEN AND TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

THERE IS MORE TO THE TOWN THAN NORTH EASTON. THIS IS A QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUE AND MY EXPECTATIONS ARE YOU "WILL" TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY AND ACT UPON IT.

**John K. Bullard  
19 Irving Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740**

May 9, 2011

Mr. Alan Anachecka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)

**RE: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on South Coast Rail  
Released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Dear Mr. Anachecka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

As a long time advocate for the need to expand commuter rail to New Bedford and the South Coast, going back to my time as Mayor of the City of New Bedford, I would like to commend the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a thorough and objective analysis of the South Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report dated February, 2011.

L-019.01

I also have acted as Chair of the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force for nearly ten years, but I would like to stress that while this experience has expanded my familiarity with this project, these comments are made in my capacity as a citizen of New Bedford and of the South Coast.

I believe that the thorough analysis in the DEIS of both the transportation and environmental factors associated with the alternatives is unassailable and leads to some very obvious conclusions. The report clearly demonstrates that the Stoughton Route provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford as measured by travel time and ridership. The Corps' analysis of the operational obstacles associated with both the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternative make it clear that these alternatives are not feasible.

L-019.02

MAY11'11 REG DIV

The analysis of environmental factors including wetlands, air quality and water resources also supports the conclusion that the Stoughton route performed best on the measure of environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route follows rail beds that were in service as recently as 1958 is an obvious factor in minimizing any negative impacts. The DEIS conclusion that the wetlands impact will be limited seems accurate, but I would support mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.

Considerable time and effort has been invested to address the smart growth benefits of this project and I want to re-emphasize the importance of this issue. Likewise, the significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled and subsequent greenhouse gas reductions resulting from this project have not been given much attention but need to be emphasized in any environmental analysis.

L-019.02

I believe that based upon the information presented in the DEIS that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) should be determined to be the Stoughton Alternative, the Commonwealth's preferred alternative. I also support the electric alternative with its lower carbon footprint and faster travel time between South Coast and Boston.

I urge the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the LEDPA as expeditiously as possible. The region has been working on the restoration of commuter rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for the Corps to complete its review so that MassDOT can proceed with a financial plan and other aspects of this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important regional project.

Sincerely,



John K. Bullard

Cc: Kristina Egan, MassDOT



**From:** steve.caste lina@comcast.net

**Sent:** Thursday, May 19, 2011 4:29 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Cc:** aisling.o' shea@state.ma.us

**Subject:** South Coast Commuter Rail Project-DEIS/DEIR-Opposition

I attended and spoke at the public hearing concerning the DEIS/DEIR on May 4th in Mansfield MA. That night , I spoke as Chairman of the Berkley Board of Selectmen expressing some of our thoughts and concerns on this issue and also aired some of my own opinions that night. I oppose the spending of public money on the extension of commuter rail to New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton.

I called this project a 2 billion dollar boondoggle for may reasons that night. Just yesterday, May 18th 2011, The Boston Globe wrote about the state of the MBTA and pointed out that ridership of commuter rail from 2008 to 2010 was down 6.8%. Granted there could be various reasons for this but one may be one that I had pointed out at the Mansfield meeting, that being that more people are now and will in the future be working from home.

E-041.01

Something else that I said in Mansfield also has to be reiterated , that is that any Route 24 traffic initially removed by commuter rail will be quickly filled in by others who see the road as a little less traveled and then we will quickly be in the same initial situation again. Solving nothing but spending billions.

E-041.02

If any transportation project is to be done then it should be the least costly alternative which is improved bus service. The money spent on this project to date could have already paid for this and it is a shame that the MBTA continues to press on with this irresponsible costly project in hopes of enlarging their empire of commuter rail.

E-041.03

Needless to say, commuter rail is never self supporting and drains the public resourses. I would never believe the MBTA's estimate of future ridership. It is completely self-serving.

The fairness doctrine for New Bedford and Fall River is childish. Just because others have commuter rail doesn't mean that everyone should. This project should be decided on it's merits and not that all cities within 60 miles of Boston should have commuter rail. As I said in Mansfield, everyone would be better served if just a fraction of the money to be spent on this project was used to encourage/promote industry and businesses to locate in Southeastern Massachusetts. Then no one would have to travel for an hour or two to get to work. This is the best environmental solution.

E-041.04

It is inconceivable to me that going thru a precious environmentally sensitive area such as the Hockomock Swamp has the least environmental impact. It's not inconceivable to me to hear that the MBTA says that this is the one that would have the least environmental impact. The MBTA makes statements and just hopes that no one questions them. If that happens, then they "win". Please do your due diligence and check everything.

E-041.05

E-041.06

Sincerely,  
Stephen Castellina  
141 Padelford Street  
Berkley, MA 02779

4 Priscilla Road  
Easton, MA 02375  
May 6, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

Please consider the following comment on the DEIS/DEIR for the South Coast Rail Project:

While MassDOT's proposed trestle across the Hockomock Swamp ACEC would serve to minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding wetlands, such construction might miss an opportunity to enhance the environmental value of the surrounding area. According to Section 4.16 of the report, the existing railroad embankment has significantly altered the hydrology of the surrounding wetland from that which existed prior to construction of the embankment, resulting in the fragmented habitat now evident in the different vegetative communities that have become established on each side of the embankment. These circumstances suggest that it may be possible to rebuild the railroad and enhance environmental conditions in the Hockomock Swamp by building a trestle that would restore the historic hydraulic regime. Consequently, the potential environmental benefits of restoring the historic hydraulic regime should be determined and if deemed significant and cost-effective captured by the project.

L-018.01

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*D. Chaffin*

David Chaffin

1. The proposed trestle across the Hockomock Swamp ACEC would serve to minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding wetlands, such construction might miss an opportunity to enhance the environmental value of the surrounding area. According to Section 4.16 of the report, the existing railroad embankment has significantly altered the hydrology of the surrounding wetland from that which existed prior to construction of the embankment, resulting in the fragmented habitat now evident in the different vegetative communities that have become established on each side of the embankment. These circumstances suggest that it may be possible to rebuild the railroad and enhance environmental conditions in the Hockomock Swamp by building a trestle that would restore the historic hydraulic regime. Consequently, the potential environmental benefits of restoring the historic hydraulic regime should be determined and if deemed significant and cost-effective captured by the project.

MAY 9'11 REG DIV

## THE SOUTH COAST RAIL

If we are supposed to be living in a democracy, where the majority rules  
Then all people of voting age should be allowed to vote on the South Coast  
Rail.

People from the Northern part of the state, Eastern and Western part of the  
state will most likely never use the south Coast Rail and should not have to  
pay for it for the rest of their lives.

***It should be put on a ballot***

Anyone who ***votes for it*** should be ***taxed for it*** for the rest of their lives.  
People who vote against it should not have to pay. ***TAX New Bedford***  
And ***Fall River***, if they want it let them pay for it.

The Right defination is: If you ***don't want it*** you ***shouldn't have to pay***  
For it, like it or not. The wrong is whether you ***don't like it*** or want it we  
will ***make you pay*** for it?

How about if you're not going to use it at all!

L-050.01

JIM D. CHISHOLM  
113 Crooked Lane  
Lakeville, Mass. 02347

MAY26'11 REG DIV



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**From:** Paul Cienniwa [pcienniwa@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 07, 2011 5:20 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'neill@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Mr. Sullivan,

I am writing you to voice my strong support for South Coast Rail. I have been a Fall River homeowner since 2006.

While I would typically use the train only once a week, I would look forward to the economic prospects that rail would bring to the region. One concern that I have not seen in the media is that of social justice. Why is it that so many other metropolitan areas within an hour of Boston (if not all) have rail while the South Coast doesn't? Even Providence has rail to Boston. This, for me, is an equity issue. A Fall River resident pays \$38 for a round-trip ticket on the Peter Pan Bus line. Introducing South Coast Rail will help keep the "M" in the MBTA.

E-026.01

There are many, many more reasons why South Coast Rail is good and necessary for the region. Please help to make this happen!

Sincerely,

Paul Cienniwa  
<http://paulcienniwa.com/>

**From:** Lynne Davis [lynne.davis@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 10:31 PM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Cc:** aisling.o' shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Commuter Rail - Comment  
 May 25, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
 Army Corps of Engineers  
 696 Virginia Road  
 Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
 EOEEA  
 Attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
 100 Cambridge Street  
 Suite 900  
 Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I am writing to provide comments on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report. I oppose construction of the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

I am very concerned about the following issues:

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1. There will be two grade crossings for me to cross should I choose to board the train at Roche Bros. Plaza. These crossings will not only create traffic for me and other residents but the entire town, which already has traffic problems due to rapid growth, will be subjected to continual traffic jams. The crossing of Rte. 106 is ill conceived as traffic to and from Five Corners already backs up significantly in both directions. | E-047.01 |
| 2. One of those crossings is approximately 200 yards from my front door. These grade crossings will disturb my current peaceful and quiet surroundings. I value these surroundings highly. The resale value of my home, essentially my life's savings, will depreciate considerably. A neighbor who lives a bit closer to the crossing has already told me he will rent his house out to Stonehill College students if the train comes through.  | E-047.02 |
| 3. The water table in our neighborhood is very high. Virtually every home has a sump pump and a new or aging septic system. It is unclear to me what the impact to the already flood prone Black Brook will be.  | E-047.03 |
| 4. There are quite a few children in the neighborhood. I am concerned for their safety if the train comes through. There have been accidents elsewhere.  | E-047.04 |
| 5. The area is abundant with wildlife, e.g., deer, rabbits, fox, coyotes and turkeys among others. The train will undoubtedly diminish the population of wildlife.   | E-047.05 |
| 6. I have ridden the Commuter Rail from Stoughton and more recently Brockton for eighteen years. I find either of these stations equally convenient to get to. However, I question the MBTA's ability to manage another fleet of trains given their apparent inability and unprofessionalism in managing the existing fleet.   | E-047.06 |
| 7. There are existing lines which extend much further south which could be used to transport   | E-047.07 |

residents of the Southcoast to Boston. There is also the option of express busing. I do not understand why we need to lay track all the way from Stoughton to Fall River and beyond. If you must lay track, the commuter rail already passes through Attleboro on it's way to Providence. New Bedford could be reached by extending the Middleboro-Lakeville line.

E-047.07

8. Finally, I am concerned about the economic feasibility of laying more track. It will be a very expensive undertaking requiring more borrowing and operation of another train line at a loss at the expense of the taxpayer.

E-047.08

I appreciate your consideration of my concerns. Please forward me a copy of the Final EIS/EIR addressing each of my concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Davis  
49 Prospect Street  
South Easton, MA 02375

Cc: Kristina Egan  
Project Director  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
Ten Park Plaza  
Suite 4150  
Boston, MA 02116-3973



Marianne B. De Souza  
1027 Ivers Street  
New Bedford, MA 02745  
Mbd5544@yahoo.com

May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
E-mail: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I am writing to submit my thoughts regarding the proposed Southcoast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Report. I regret that I was unable to attend the hearing held in New Bedford due to the recent death of a family friend.

First of all, I wish to have my opinion accepted and considered as decisions regarding the future of New Bedford and surrounding communities in the Southcoast hang in the balance. I wish to be on record as strongly advocating in favor of the extension of the Southcoast Rail to the City of New Bedford.

L-067.01

As a public health professional, taxpayer, and a parent, I believe that linking the City of New Bedford to Greater Boston and other communities south of Boston via rail will benefit public health and economic development. I support the alternate route through Stoughton because it is more direct and will reduce commute time which will offer of social benefit by increasing time for family and recreation beyond the work day. People who use the rail will increase their physical activity helping to reduce the epidemic of obesity that currently exists by frequent walks to and from rail access points. Increased pedestrian activity also promotes safer neighborhoods.

L-067.02

A major benefit from the rail will be to reduce fuel exhaust from the many vehicles that traverse our roads and highways enroute to educational, medical, workplace, entertainment, and cultural mecca in Boston. These exhausts present an environmental health hazard and serve as a trigger exacerbating the risk and triggers for asthma in our general population. Air quality in Massachusetts will improve as a result of the Southcoast Rail. I support the electric rather than the diesel system because it will be faster and more environmentally friendly. It will also be amenable to future technology of solar or wind energy.

L-067.03

Another tangible benefit from the Southcoast Rail coming to New Bedford will be to increase opportunities for employment for New Bedford residents and neighboring communities that cannot afford the costly commutes via motor vehicles which is a matter of Environmental Justice. This will also help to fuel the local economy and provide a source of hope and opportunity that will benefit families and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by helping to reduce unemployment in an area of the state that has been particularly hard hit for generations.

Thank you for considering my views and allowing me to have a voice in this important matter that will impact future generations.

Marianne B. De Souza

Peter Deschenes  
236 Depot Street  
South Easton, MA 02375

Friday, May 20, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

RE: South Coast Rail Stoughton Alternative

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I write you regarding my concerns about the South Coast Rail Stoughton Alternative.

L-032.01

From a planning perspective I am not against the South Coast Rail Stoughton Alternative. Each alternative has its' pros and cons therefore whichever route the Army Corps chooses is likely the most feasible.

My first concern is that the amount of time given to municipalities and residents to review the DEIS and make comments is woefully inadequate.

L-032.02

In addition to the official mitigation requests of the Town of Easton and surrounding communities, I am particularly concerned with how the grade crossings in Easton will infect the town with traffic blight.

L-032.03

Route 123(Depot Street) in Easton from Route 106 to Route 138 is a 200+ year old road which has become a cut-through between Route 495 and Route 24. As of 2007, this stretch of road had an average daily traffic volume of 16,975, concentrated during commuting hours. It has several sharp turns and is narrow such that if a large truck is passing through, a pedestrian or biker must move at least a few feet onto the shoulder.

The proposed rail route will cross Depot St., causing major traffic delays. While the crossing is inevitable if the Stoughton alternative is chosen, several mitigation measures would help to minimize the impact on our safety and general quality of life:

1. Drainage, road improvements, and sidewalk installation from Center St. to Route 138.
2. Intersection studies and improvements at Depot St./Center St., Depot St./Short St., and Depot St./Route 138.
3. Signs giving drivers ample notice that there is a train crossing ahead. Given the placement of the road curves relative to the crossing, we will end up with at least some fender benders as people tend to drive fast down the road.

I understand that we cannot fix every road and protect every toad in Southeastern Massachusetts as part of the rail process. We can work together to minimize the impact on our safety and quality of life, particularly in towns like Raynham and Easton with much to lose and little to gain from the project.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Peter Deschenes

MAY23'11 REG DIV

27 Linden Street  
North Easton, MA 02356  
May 17, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Project Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann:

My name is Lynn Dhooge and I live on Linden Street in North Easton which is right near the proposed Stoughton Alternative of the South Coast Rail Project. I am writing to voice my objections to the Stoughton Alternative on several grounds. First of all, the quality of life which I moved to Linden Street for will be greatly diminished. My family and I moved to Linden Street because of its close proximity to the YMCA, the library, the Main Street area and the NRT Sheep Pasture. Not only that, this area is very quiet and family-oriented. We enjoy hearing the birds sing and the other various sounds of nature. I am not looking forward to have multiple trains passing my house every day with both the air and noise pollution which will result. As I am right near Elm Street and Oliver Street is the next street over, I am assuming the trains will be blowing their whistles at each crossing. I am sure I will be able to hear the Main Street one as well. I grew up across the street from the commuter rail and Amtrak tracks in Jamaica Plain and I moved away from them as quickly as I could. Where I grew up I was not nearly as close to the tracks as I will be with the Stoughton Alternative. However, when those trains went by they shook the house and their whistles were quite loud. This brings me to my next grievance with the proposed Stoughton Alternative. My house is a little over 100 years old. Can I be assured that in no way will the vibrations and pollution that will be emitted by the trains not destroy or in some way adversely effect my home? The homes in this area were built by the workers of the Ames Shovel Company and as stated in the US Army Corps of Engineers report, they are simple wooden structures. In addition to the effects the trains will have on the homes themselves, the trains would destroy the historic district of North Easton by slicing through the very heart of the district. One could argue that there used to be trains that went through the area and that is accurate. However, unless I am mistaken, those were freight trains. It is my understanding that freight trains do not travel at the same speed as passenger trains and I do not believe that the freight trains ran as frequently as proposed by the Stoughton Alternative. My last main concern regarding the Stoughton Alternative is the effect it will have on the safety of my children as well as the other children in the area. As I mentioned previously, I live right near the proposed tracks and right near Elm Street and Oliver Street. One of the benefits of living in this neighborhood that initially attracted my family was the sidewalks. My family and I take walks around the neighborhood all the time. I cannot help but worry about what these trains will mean for the children in the neighborhood. I understand it is the parents' obligation to teach their children these things, but if the cause of concern can be averted, that would be the ideal solution. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and I hope that they help you to understand

E-040.01



how the proposed Stoughton Alternative will not only effect the environment which I know has been deliberated often, but also how it will effect our history, neighborhoods, our children, our quality of life and our actual homes. Perhaps, it would be best to start with the rapid bus to gauge public interest as opposed to basing the decision on the politicians' interests. I do not believe that the proposed benefit of these trains in any way supersedes the detriment they will cause to those who live in its path.

E-040.01

Sincerely yours,

Lynn A. Dhooge

## O'Shea, Aisling (EEA)

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**From:** Dion, Nicole [NDion@eapdlaw.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2011 3:55 PM  
**To:** O'Shea, Aisling (EEA)  
**Subject:** Stop the train through Easton

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office [Aisling O'Shea], EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

RE: SOUTH COAST RAIL PROJECT

E-071.01

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

Cost – the \$2 Billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.

Feasibility – it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275 - \$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of 1 hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.

Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.

7 traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.

Historical Areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.

Dividing the town impedes Police/Fire/Ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.

The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.

Name: Nicole Dion  
Address: 84 Foundry Street, So. Easton, MA 02375  
Phone or Email: [noid84@comcast.net](mailto:noid84@comcast.net)

May 7, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke=Nasemann [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

RE: SOUTHCOAST RAIL SERVICE

Dear Sir:

I am sending copies of this letter to Mayors and state senators and representatives and to the Editor in Chief of GateHouse Media requesting publication in southeastern MA in the hope that I may encourage you and the people of our southeastern Massachusetts region to consider an alternative plan for rail service to our region. My suggestion has been ignored whenever I have tried to suggest it over the past twenty-five years or so. Considering the legitimate protests that continue over the various routes and plans presented over the years, and wishing to propose an idea that could resolve those concerns, and still provide, what I consider, an obvious resolution. Twenty years ago, for three years, I chaired Fall River Mayor Ed Lambert's Transportation Task Force with rail service at the top of our agenda for years. While Chairman of the Greater Fall River Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we met with Governors and legislators to try to promote this needed public transportation service to our south coast region. Promises were made and plans delayed because of funding and justifiable objections by citizens whose property and lives would be compromised by the plans under consideration. E-027.01

In my frequent drives between Boston and various locations of Attleboro, Easton, Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and the Cape I am frustrated that state and regional planners and engineers have not considered mono-rail or track service at the median areas of existing highways. I remember some legislators saying mono-rail services work fine in warm climate areas like Disney, but would not be functional in ice and snow. I have displayed news articles about mono-rail public transportation services in the North West, which persuades me that inclement weather is not a justifiable objection. Picture it. Monorail services to and from Boston, swishing along overhead next to traffic jammed highways. Consider also the easy access for maintenance or other problems that occur in transportation systems. Consider the safety and security of people traveling along areas easily accessible by police and other public services in these times of terrorist threats and other dangers in our society today. And if mono-rail cannot be considered, rail tracks, which seem so antiquated to me, could be constructed in the same median locations.

Cross-over bridges would need to be reconstructed, and highways widened in some areas, but I feel confident that the cost of this construction would be considerably less than the \$2 Billion cost of current plans, which are unnecessarily complicating the process of accomplishing rail services. Put the rail service (mono or otherwise) along the highway routes that are already there. No marshes. No city or town traffic



E-027.01

intersections. No dangerous crossings. Public parking areas could be developed at places along the road route. Some are already there.

I wish someone, other than me, would feel this idea at least deserves serious consideration, and not summarily discarded for whatever reason. Back twenty years ago, some people who had devoted much effort to the development of plans then under consideration, asked me to back away from this proposal as it was "way out" and that to consider it would cause further delays in getting the project approved and accomplished. Well, twenty years later I'm hearing and reading the same objections I heard back then, and as planners persist on promoting objectionable plans, costs have risen astronomically. I would hope the idea of routing the rail service within or next to, along existing highway routes would be given consideration. If accomplished it could become a model for cities and towns everywhere as new, faster, safer public transportation services are needed more than ever before as an alternative to costly operation of private automobiles and pollution and traffic congestion become more and more a public concern.

Respectfully submitted,

(original signed)

Frederic C. Dreyer, Jr.  
President Emeritus and Honorary Trustee  
Southcoast Health System  
personal mail: P.O. Box 528, North Dighton, MA 02764

May 7, 2011

Lisa Strattan, Editor in Chief  
GateHouse Media  
[eic@tauntongazette.com](mailto:eic@tauntongazette.com)

Dear Lisa:

I'm a face and voice from long ago (retired 15 years ago) when I was actively involved in hospital, community and regional affairs. Since then rail service service to our region has continued to be a central issue and concern to people throughout our region. Reading the "Easton Protests Rail Plan at Hearing" article in this morning's Taunton Gazette I decided to come out of hiding long enough to express, what I consider a viable solution. It is an idea I feel could interest readers, and hopefully considered by some as an idea "whose time has come"--a viable political and practical alternative for those who continue to raise legitimate concerns about trains racing through their towns and neighborhoods endangering the lives and peace of families and communities while providing a way to proceed with the development of a much-needed public rail service for the people of our region.

As directed at the conclusion of the Gazette article, I've addressed a letter to the individual representing The Army Corps of Engineers. But, I would hope my proposal would not be limited to engineering considerations.

Respectfully, I request that my attached letter appear in the "Opinion & Editorial" section of you southeastern Mass newspapers in the form of an Editorial or "Letter to the Editor."

Sincerely,

("Rick")

Frederic C. Dreyer, Jr. (cell: 508 642 2481)  
P.O. Box 528  
North Dighton, MA 02764

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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:05 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: Photos in the South Coast Rail DEIR (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** Erik Edson [mailto:eedson@skyword.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 31, 2011 12:34 PM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Subject:** RE: Photos in the South Coast Rail DEIR (UNCLASSIFIED)

Thank you Alan, and thanks for all the work you put into this report.

Good Day!

Erik Edson | Gather Program Manager  
**Skyword** | the leader in Search-Driven Media™  
234 Congress St., 4th Floor | Boston, MA 02110  
617-720-4000 ext. 1039  
[eedson.gather.com](http://eedson.gather.com)

---

**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE [mailto:Alan.R.Anacheke-nasemann@usace.army.mil]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 31, 2011 11:27 AM  
**To:** Erik Edson  
**Cc:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** RE: Photos in the South Coast Rail DEIR (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

Most of the figures are in Volume II of the report. Here's the link to the Visual Chapter:  
<http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/DEIS/Vol2/4.5%20Visual%20Resources-.pdf>

Please let us know if you need any further assistance.

Alan R. Anacheke-Nasemann, PWS  
Sr. Project Manager/Ecologist, Regulatory Division  
New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Rd.  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
978-318-8214/8303 (FAX)

In order for us to better serve you, we would appreciate your completing our Customer Service Survey located at <http://per2.nwp.usace.army.mil/survey.html>

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**From:** Erik Edson [mailto:eedson@skyword.com]



**Sent:** Thursday, March 31, 2011 11:22 AM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Subject:** Photos in the South Coast Rail DEIR

E-005.01

Hey, I was wondering if you could point me to where the photos (or figures) mentioned in the South Coast Rail DEIR are displayed. In particular I was looking for all the figures mentioned in the "Visual" section of the report: |

<http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/DEIS/Vol1/4.5%20Visual.pdf>

Thank you for taking the time to respond!

Good Day!

Erik Edson | Gather Program Manager  
**Skyword** | **the leader in Search-Driven Media™**  
234 Congress St., 4th Floor | Boston, MA 02110  
617-720-4000 ext. 1039  
[eedson.gather.com](http://eedson.gather.com)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** bookmood@aol.com

**Sent:** Thursday, April 28, 2011 3:01 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

I live in Stoughton and am against the plan to run train service from Fall River and New Bedford to Boston. These trains won't even stop in Stoughton, so are of no benefit to us residents. These trains will only tie up traffic even more in a busy area.  
I'm for the No-Build Alternative.

E-018.01

Roseanne Felago  
Stoughton, MA

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**From:** Joe F [joef271@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2011 12:48 PM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Southcoast Rail

To Whom it May Concern,

I am an Easton resident who strongly opposes the train to route through Easton. I have lived in Easton for 27 of the last 30 years. I grew up here. I lived in Bridgewater briefly for 3 years, and although not extremely close to the train, within a few miles. My experience in Bridgewater has brought me to learn that the train is not good for suburban communities. Not just the noise, but whenever children are out to play it becomes an extremely dangerous situation in which is not necessary. Also in Bridgewater, it has become a constant issue about emergency service access. I implore you to chose another route that is more suited and away from residential neighborhood. Thanks you for your time.

E-031.01

Sincerely,  
Joe Fellone



May 25, 2011

48 Pond Street  
North Easton, MA

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)  
fax: 978-318-8303

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)  
fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery

Re: South Coast Rail Proposed North Easton Village Train Station Comments

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Mr. Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.

I am writing this letter express my dismay regarding the proposed train station in North Easton village as shown on the attached sketch.

L-051.01

There are many aspects of the proposed plan that are flawed. The first and foremost flaw is the very concept of a "dropoff station" in New England. For many years my wife worked in Boston. As my career developed, I would drive her to various commuter stations (rail - Mansfield, Sharon, Canton, MBTA Redline - Quincy Adams, Quincy) and then pick her up at night. Given the variability of New England weather, rare was the day that she would be willing get out of the car and go and wait at/on the platform. The vast majority of the time it was raining, snowing, sleeting, too windy, too cold, too hot, too humid, etc, etc for her to get out of the car until the last minute. I was typically surrounded by others whose significant others would also resist leaving the comfort of their car until the last minute. A dropoff station without idling vehicles lining both sides of the adjacent streets is totally unrealistic in New England.

The narrow configuration of Sullivan Street will only compound the problem. As a result of the foreseeable economy, the local police force will not have the staff to patrol and enforce any imposed parking restrictions. More importantly, the police want to create an atmosphere of cooperation with the local citizens, not to be forced into what would be perceived as a confrontational situation to harass and antagonize them by having them continue to circle the block (adding to the traffic issues).

L-051.02

To suggest that commuters will bicycle to a non-urban train station is only slightly less absurd. Both my wife and I regularly use our bicycles for recreation. Neither one of us would consider using a bicycle for commuting to work. First, it is totally ridiculous to consider riding a bicycle in the cold weather, ice and snow for painfully obvious reasons. During the summer heat and humidity, no one will want to ride a bike, or walk any significant distance in these conditions simply because they probably will not have access to a morning shower at their place of employment. Subtract the rainy and other weather related days from those days remaining and the actual number of days that a bicycle would be an attractive and viable alternate to a vehicle results in too few days to be considered a significant design element.

L-051.03

Furthermore, the new train station is proposed to be located in the historic North Easton village area, an area established back in the late 1700's, early 1800's. Thus, the streets in the surrounding area are narrow and not at all conducive to creating a dedicated bicycle lane or establishing the other features of a bicycle friendly environment. In fact, due to the location of and the activities at the popular Children's Museum (not identified on the attached

South Coast Rail sketch), there was consideration a few years back to make narrow Sullivan Avenue a one way street to provide a safer environment for the number of children attending the daily events at the Museum.

If the project proceeds, the "reconstructed parking area" shown on the sketch should be eliminated in its entirety. This parking lot would not only encourage "parking" but would also increase the risk of pedestrian and vehicle encounters due to the very limited maneuvering space available. I would certainly expect that a traffic study would be conducted of the surrounding streets prior to the start of any further engineering plans and that a realistic estimate of vehicular traffic and the South Coast Rail projected pedestrian and bicycle rider count would be accounted for in the study.

L-051.04

At the recent 2011 May Town Meeting, the Town of Easton approved the creation of a 48 acre public Governor Ames Park, literally in direct line of sight of the proposed rail station. Although I would not expect the new park to draw the majority of its visitors and children during the peak commuting hours, any traffic studies for this proposed station should include the projected visits to this new park.

I attended a public hearing for the proposed train station adjacent to the Roche Bros supermarket. At the hearing, the consultant who had developed the plans stated that he was instructed by the South Coast Rail staff "to make the renderings of the new station area (Roche Bros station) look attractive and cool". He did not include the words efficient, practical, or realistic in his response. It would appear that a similar instruction was issued by the South Coast Rail staff to develop the design concepts at the proposed station in the North Easton Village location, again without the primary design goals of being efficient, practical or realistic.

L-051.05

Sincerely,



Paul Fitzpatrick

Cc: Easton BoS







May 25, 2011

48 Pond Street  
North Easton, MA

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)  
fax: 978-318-8303

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)  
fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery

Re: South Coast Rail Proposed Rail Line Ridership

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Mr. Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.

I am writing this letter to comment on the anticipated ridership being used to justify the proposed South Coast Rail extension from Stoughton to the Fall River/New Bedford area.

I have worked in Boston for many years, alternating between driving, riding the train and taking the "T" as the frustration level for each mode ebbed and flowed. If the existing rail service lived up to a convenient, comfortable and reliable service, it would be in demand and considered to be a desirable alternate, not the result of an evaluation to determine the least painful alternative to a commute into Boston.

I have never witnessed nor participated in any survey conducted onboard the train or at any of the train stations that I have used (including South Station) regarding the proposed South Coast Rail project. Certainly with the current projected cost, a live person survey would not seem to be an exorbitant cost to determine the potential ridership. The survey could provide some important project information. For example, if the survey simply revealed that a commuter would now board the train in Taunton versus Stoughton, that person should not be defined as a "new" rider boarding the train in Taunton to help justify the project.

I have not seen survey forms in the Boston Globe, the Brockton Enterprise or any of the local newspapers along the proposed rail line, which the public could fill out and send in to justify the ridership.

I have not seen billboards, illuminated signs or any other invitation to a survey on the side of Route 24 that would allow the South Coast Rail staff to arrive at a determination of how many drivers would opt for the rail or other alternative to the daily drive on Route 24.

I have not seen a web based survey on the South Coast Rail website or elsewhere to determine the potential ridership.

Although I live within a one mile radius of the proposed rail line, I am not aware of any door-to-door survey conducted by students at Bridgewater State College or Stonehill College, for example, to determine the actual interest of local residents to utilize the proposed rail and if they did, would it be at a loss to another mode of public transportation instead of not driving on Route 24.

It would seem that the South Coast Rail management does not want to see the results of a real life survey that would conflict with or require an explanation for why the survey is not applicable.

L-052.01

What I have seen, is the projected ridership developed by consulting firms in an attempt to justify the development of the rail extension. One of the main goals of a consulting company is to truly understand the wants and needs of its clientele and the clientele's desired results and then provide them with the backup information and justification to continue their work. This approach frequently encourages future work contracts and assignments for the consulting company. I worked for just such a consulting company in the past.

L-052.01

The first and foremost goal for the MBTA should be to achieve the status of "desired mode of transportation" on its present existing routes. Only after this goal is achieved, and I emphasize "only", should the MBTA be allowed to expand. If the proposed South Coast Rail project is allowed to proceed, it is virtually a given that more commuters will be further alienated and frustrated as the service on the existing lines continues to deteriorate due to lack of funds. The cost liability for construction, upkeep, maintenance and repair for this project will soon have the citizens of Massachusetts forget the Big Dig project as this rail extension will set a new bar height for out-of-control project costs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul Fitzpatrick", written in a cursive style.

Paul Fitzpatrick

Cc: Easton BoS

263 Depot Street  
Easton, MA 02375

May 18, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA Office [Aisling O'Shea], EEA No.14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Richard K. Sullivan,  
Subject: South Coast Rail Comments

I am writing to outline my concerns with the proposed “Stoughton Alternative” rail project, with a particular focus on the section through Easton MA. There are two topics that I would like to address. The first being the various deleterious effects of the surface grade crossings in Easton. The second being the noise impact to residents. The following will describe my concerns and highlight some areas in the DEIS/DEIR which I believe are lacking.

E-058.01

I have studied at length the traffic volume and average delay times for all streets in Easton, MA. My major concern is the impact of train traffic on emergency response vehicles, which was not included in the DEIS/DEIR. There are two heavily travelled roads (Route 123 and Route 106) that connect the west side (where the police and fire stations are located) to the east side of Easton. The rail will also separate the west side of Easton, MA from the two major hospitals in the area (Brockton Hospital and Good Samaritan Hospital). This concern is supported by the data presented in table 4.1-56. There is an expected total of 950 feet (475 feet each direction) queue length estimated at Route 123, and 550 feet (275 feet each side) of queue length for Route 106, rating these roads now at the Class E Level of Service (LOS). It is assumed there will be freight trains used on this rail, which these traffic numbers do not reflect. Freight trains can consist of 100 cars or more, and their considerable length and slower speed will very likely affect traffic simultaneously on both Route 123 and Route 106. With both major routes blocked, the route through the center of North Easton would be the only alternative, but the high pedestrian concentration and number of connecting streets (about 12) make this alternative fraught with potential delays or hazard to pedestrians. In addition, there is no mention in the DEIS/DEIR that the project has any targets to keep the LOS under a specific level, especially where public safety will be negatively impacted by the emergency response time to businesses and residences.

The second major gap in the DEIS/DEIR is the failure to mention the potential impact to the safety of young kids that play, live, and attend schools where the rail will be running. The rail through Easton, MA will be passing at street grade directly along the YMCA main building, as well as across the two access roads (Elm Street, and Oliver Street). The rail will also cross at the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School on Route

E-058.02



106 and near the Center School on Route 123. All these areas are frequently used by young children and present a high risk of injury or death.

E-058.02

Lastly, I want to outline the noise concerns. The noise tables within the DEIS/DEIR indicate Route 123 will be the most significantly affected in regards to noise level (>65dBA level). This level is rated as severe. The DEIS/DEIR states a barrier will reduce the level by 10dBA, but this may not bring the noise level out of the severe classification. There is no mention if the project will or will not be bringing all severe noise areas to or under a specific noise threshold. The reason this concerns me further is the statement mentioning that these mitigations would only be done “if cost effective”. This statement implies that the South Coast Rail Project will be making this call and I suspect that due to tight budgets these barriers will be the first to be cut, especially where these barriers don’t resolve the high noise levels.

E-058.03

In conclusion, the impact to emergency response times, the safety of young children in our town, and the significant noise levels warrant a need for improved passage through Easton, MA. I request further analysis and details in these areas, especially along Route 123. I would like to propose that a non street grade crossing be considered for Route 123. Route 123 is the highest traffic route, the noise level is the greatest, and the central location through Easton, MA makes it the most ideal option to alleviate several issues. I would not only like to see an improved plan to address these concerns, but I think it will be important to have the South Coast Rail make its guarantees clear and legally binding. I recently read a news story regarding the Lakeville rail line and I was shocked to hear that Bridgewater, MA was promised “everything from not exceeding certain speeds as they crossed at-grade streets to installing quad gates to reduce unauthorized access and prevent injuries and accidents, *but were not given anything*”. I do not want to see these mistakes repeated on this rail project.

E-058.04

Sincerely,

Stephen Ford

cc: David Colton, Easton Town Administrator  
Mary Southworth, Executive Assistant/HR Assistant  
Brad Washburn, Easton Planning Director  
Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Project Director  
Alan R. Anacheke-Nasemann, PWS Sr. Project Manager/Ecologist

May 2, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754

Re: Comment on South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

Please accept this letter as my support of a commuter train operating along the Stoughton route. Although more expensive, an electric train is environmentally preferable. This recommendation stems from a review of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the state's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). I am wholly supportive of this alternative in light of the economic benefits as well as the long-term environmental implications.

The DEIS for the South Coast Rail project was adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as the state-required DEIR. MassDOT identifies the Stoughton alternative as the preferred route for providing optimal transportation service while heeding environmental priorities and offering smart growth benefits for the region. This route also keeps commute times to a reasonable minimum, thus providing a convenient, reliable, and feasible commuter option for the South Coast.

As a selectman in the Town of Freetown and a workforce development professional, I am pleased with the level of effort undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers in this comprehensive DEIS. In addition, I appreciate the commitment of MassDOT in working with the 31 corridor communities to identify pitfalls, propose options, encourage constructive commentary by all stakeholders, and undertake a forward-thinking strategy of transit-oriented design and development to help steer those communities toward smart growth options and plans.

With the advent of South Coast Rail, estimates peg economic growth at about \$500 million annually, with some 3,500 long-term employment opportunities by 2030. Rail construction jobs will provide an additional 7,000 – 8,000 well paying jobs. The South Coast urban hubs, in particular, have struggled with significantly higher levels of unemployment and lower growth rates in recent years; as a result, these jobs and the rail will infuse much-needed energy into the local economy. The connection to Boston and other areas in the Commonwealth will serve to join a growing, vibrant region to the rest of the state, significantly bolstering the human resource potential of Massachusetts. In addition, the 70 priority preservation sites will receive the attention they deserve as a result of this important project.

I thank you for the significant and comprehensive effort expended on behalf of South Coast Rail and the people and economy of the region. I can be reached at 508-965-2161; 11 Jeffrey Lane, Assonet, MA 02702; [jeancfox@comcast.net](mailto:jeancfox@comcast.net); [jfox@gnbwib.org](mailto:jfox@gnbwib.org).

Sincerely,

Jean C. Fox  
Freetown Selectman  
Youth Council Director, Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board

E-020.01

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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:09 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: South Coast Rail (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** Bobbi Fried [mailto:bobbiele@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 02, 2011 9:36 AM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Cc:** timmermann.timothy@epa.gov  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail

Dear Alan,

Given that the DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, we respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. Thank you for your consideration.

E-007.01

Sincerely,

Bobbi Fried  
11 Olde Farm Road  
South Easton, MA 02375

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:07 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: south coast rail (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

---

**From:** Aimee Fried-Hardy [mailto:afriedha@skidmore.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 01, 2011 2:35 PM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Subject:** south coast rail

Dear Alan,

Given that the DEIS on the SouthCoast rail is over 2,500 pages, we respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. Thank you for your consideration.

E-011.01

Sincerely,

Aimee Fried-Hardy

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** Joseph Garies [gcg@fullchannel.net]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 04, 2011 11:33 AM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** south coast rail

Alan

I have an opportunity to purchase a parcel of land located at 775 Davol St Fall River MA, my question to you, Is the south coast rail project 100% approved ? will this property be part of the project ? will it be taken in emanate domain ? or if property is needed for project they give you fair market value ? Please answer any questions you can, and if there is a question you can not answer please direct me in the right direction, Thank You

E-019.01

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Thank You

Joseph Garies

Global Consulting Group LLC

401-426-9711

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann,  
US Army Corps of Engineers, New England  
District,  
696 Virginia Road,  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

1261 West Street  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
May 25, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900,  
Boston, MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

**Re: Comments Re South Coast Rail  
Permit Application # NAE-2007-00698    EEA # 14346**

Let me begin by pointing out some major inconsistencies between the MassDOT's South Coast Rail (SCR) Project preferred option and the AMTRAK concept of what is needed in the future to allow Boston, which is the principal economic engine of Massachusetts, to be connected by rail to the rest of the Northeast Corridor. The AMTRAK concepts are found in two reports available on the AMTRAK website under the heading "Northeast Corridor Vision and Plans"

<http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=am%2FLayout&p=1237608345018&cid=1241245669222>

- Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Master Plan, June 2010 (cover indicates date MAY 2010)
- A Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor, September 2010 (September 27, 2010)

These inconsistencies call into question the useful life of the SCR project when measured against cost and expected service. These reports show that project success relies on passing along future costs (from about 2030 onward) to other entities (most likely AMTRAK) to solve a public problem that should be addressed cooperatively rather than competitively.

I will show that there are remarkable parallels between the long range planning for this project and planning done by predecessor Massachusetts Transportation planners when they created the Quincy Bottleneck on the Middleboro Route (taking a four track system and making it a single train track system when the MBTA Red Line was extended).

It is important to highlight that the two AMTRAK reports referenced in this letter became available in 2010, over a year after the deadline for public comments on the SCR ENF. The information in these reports is very relevant to the options to be considered in the final determinations of the Corps of Engineers. Had the information been available earlier, more of the options that Mass DOT rejected should have been included in the DEIS. The AMTRAK documents indicate that the system capacity of the Northeast Corridor, which the MassDOT's preferred option relies on, will be exceeded by 2030. Thus the useful life of the SCR project would only be about 15 years after it is built at a cost of \$1.88 billion.

I make no apologies for the length of this discussion. I do not expect many readers of this letter to examine - on their own and side by side - the reports noted above and this discussion. Thus, in order to facilitate such side by side review - I have included large segments of the text of these reports. It is this concurrent examination that is needed to evaluate this SCR Project in the context of other's plans and expectations.

**ESTIMATES OF NUMBER OF TRAINS AMTRAK NEEDS UNDERSTATED**

The AMTRAK - Northeast Corridor Master Plan Final Report June 2010 Part 2 page 2 calls for 10 more Acela trains per day on the NEC line see text below.

L-053.01

L-053.02



Amtrak's 2030 plans call for increases in service between Boston and New York, from 38 daily trains (19 round trips) to 48 trains (24 daily round trips), providing hourly *Acela Express* and near hourly *Regional* services throughout the day. Five additional trains are projected to operate out of Boston over the "Inland Route" through Worcester to Springfield and New Haven. Amtrak is also planning up to 30 minutes of trip-time improvements between Boston and New York by 2030 which will benefit from proposed additional passing capability on this segment to maintain existing levels of reliability for all users.

Compare this to the 2008 SCR ENF (see Chapter 4 – pages 6 & 7 ... sections of text extracted below), where Mass DOT used a 2003 Report and the following assumptions to support the decision to use the NEC line for the SCR project (see yellow highlights added to this text to show the stark difference). You'll note the service difference.

#### 4.2.1 2030 Operating Plan

The Northeast Corridor is the busiest passenger rail line in the United States in terms of passengers and service frequency. As the only corridor offering true high speed rail service in the country, it is a vital component of Amtrak's current and future operation. To protect its interest in the portion of the corridor that it does not own, between the Rhode Island state line and South Station, Amtrak entered into an agreement with the MBTA for the use and maintenance of the corridor. The term of this agreement extends beyond 2030. Therefore, in developing a 2030 baseline operating plan both Amtrak and the MBTA future plans for the corridor needed to be considered, consistent with their agreement.


- **MBTA - Northeast Corridor:** The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. One additional train was added during each peak period to the all of the commuter lines operating on the Northeast Corridor between South Station and Providence with the exception of the Framingham/Worcester service. This resulted in an additional four trains operating in the peak periods.
- **MBTA - Old Colony Railroad (OCRR):** The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. It was found that the current operating plan on the OCRR mainline could not support additional trains. Alternatives involving the OCRR could only be extensions of existing service unless major infrastructure improvements were to be constructed, so no additional service was added as part of the 2030 "No Build" to the OCRR.
- **Amtrak – Northeast Corridor:** The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline and then a plan formulated by Amtrak as part of a previous study in 2003 (MTA/LIRR East Side Access Project and the Metro-North/ConnDOT New Haven Line Traction Power Study) was used resulting in the following changes: add one AM departure, add one PM departure, and two PM arrivals, and subtract one AM arrival.

The above information does not address the technological change to allow for a 220 mph train system proposed by AMTRAK, which will require major structural changes noted in the report below.

#### ESTIMATES OF AMTRAK SYSTEM NEEDS NOT ADDRESSED

The AMTRAK Report A Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor September 2010 indicates that AMTRAK proposes to link Boston to Washington DC with a 220 mph train system **with increased train frequency** ... to compete with short range air travel within the NEC. Portions of this report are shown below. *I have included my comments in the report. To distinguish between the two, I'll indent and use smaller font for my comments.*


## Introductory Letter from



# AMTRAK

**W**e are pleased to present this initial look at how Next-Generation ("Next-Gen") High-Speed Rail service could be successfully developed in the Northeast with sustained maximum speeds of 220 mph (354 kph), three-hour trip times between Washington and Boston, and an increase in the number of train frequencies to get passengers where they need to be, when they need to be there fast, safely and efficiently. It is a vision of a realistic and attainable future that can revolutionize transportation, travel patterns and economic development in the Northeast.

As America's intercity passenger rail service provider and only high-speed rail operator, Amtrak has a vital, leading and necessary role to play in expanding and operating high-speed rail service across the country. In this role, it is incumbent upon Amtrak to put forward a vision for a next-generation, financially viable network along the Northeast Corridor (NEC). It would provide tremendous mobility benefits to the traveling public and support the growth and competitive position of the region by investing in a vital transportation necessity whose time has come.





Page 7 of this September 2010 report highlights a major flaw in the overall rail plan, represented in the following quote.

"The 2010-2030 NEC Master Plan developed by Amtrak, in consultation with states, commuter rail and freight operators, and other agencies, calls for \$52 billion in investments to cover needed system repair and upgrades and some capacity enhancements to help handle the projected 60% increase in intercity and commuter trips in the corridor by 2030 alone. Unfortunately, whatever added capacity is realized under this plan would be exceeded by 2030, limiting Amtrak's ability to add service, especially higher-speed Acela trains which utilize more track capacity due to their higher speeds." (Note that the Northeast Corridor Master Plan Final Report June 2010 is referred to here as "The 2010-2030 NEC Master Plan".)

Pages 10 and 11 of this September 2010 report provides a conceptual alignment that parallels the line from Boston to the Route 128 Rail Station and then turns on a new route to Woonsocket RI and on to Hartford, CT and on to NYC. I have included the entire text of the introduction to this section along with the entire text of the New York City to Boston discussion and highlighted the portion from just "South of Route 128 to Boston".

*The Mass DOT's discussion of its preferred option in the February 2011 SCR DEIS expresses what appear to be extremely high costs and enormous social challenges along this portion of the South Coast Rail route (operated by AMTRAK) if more traffic is added to this route (see detailed discussion further on). Yet the MassDOT seems to be helping to increase this traffic by selecting any Northeast Corridor option. Mass DOT could take a longer view and help AMTRAK to solve a problem rather than exacerbating one that it knows will occur.*

Pages 10 and 11 of the Amtrak September 2010 Report follow:

### 3.0 Next-Gen High-Speed Rail — Possible Alignments

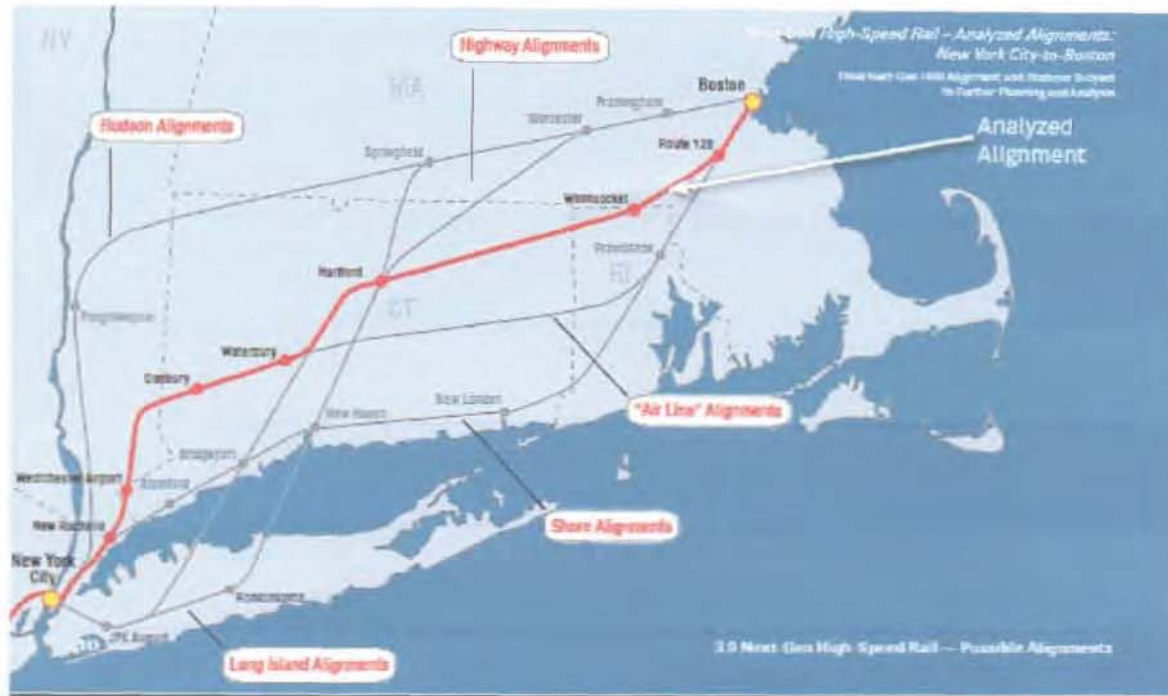
The study team needed to develop a highly conceptual alignment with sufficient detail to allow capital costs, travel times, ridership and other factors to be estimated. The potential alignment goals were to:

- Provide service to key market areas and enable travel time goals to be met,
- Connect to local and regional train services,
- Be constructible and phased with existing NEC systems,
- Provide a separate two-track high-speed rail alignment, following existing corridors where possible,
- Limit impacts on existing development and sensitive areas (e.g. parks, wetlands, etc.), and
- Minimize capital costs where possible.

A number of possible alignments were initially analyzed for their potential to meet these goals.

**New York City to Boston** In the New York City-to-Boston segment, the study team examined a variety of potential alignments (see figure at bottom of page), including a "Shore Alignment" paralleling the existing NEC; a "Long Island Alignment" heading east of out New York and traversing Long Island Sound; and "Highway" alignments paralleling all or portions of major interstate highways, including I-84, I-90 and I-91, through Connecticut and Massachusetts. It is important to note that virtually all of the alignments considered pose a variety of construction and environmental challenges. It was beyond the scope of this study to analyze all potential alignments in significant detail. However, a representative alignment was chosen for analytical and costing purposes. This "Analyzed Alignment," as shown in the figure, parallels the existing NEC from New York to just north of New Rochelle, then follows a combination of highway, rail and overland routes through Connecticut and Massachusetts, before rejoining the existing NEC south of Rt. 128 in Massachusetts and paralleling it into Boston. A route substantially paralleling the existing NEC between Boston and New York was not chosen for initial analytical purposes because of a combination of capacity constraints on Metro-North's New Haven Line between New Haven and New Rochelle. Curvature restrictions and design requirements to meet environmental concerns on the Amtrak-owned "Shore Line" from the Massachusetts state line to New Haven would make it extremely difficult to meet the travel time targets of approximately one hour and 30 minute service.

A map of this conceptual alignment is shown here.



This ends the text taken from the AMTRAK September 2010 Report.

### **MBTA LONG TERM SYSTEM EXPANSION NEEDS NOT ADDRESSED**

Remember the 2008 SCR ENF (see Chapter 4 – pages 6 & 7 ... sections of text extracted below)? The planning assumptions relating to system expansion are shown below - in yellow - and by the opportunity to double-deck the trains and perhaps add two cars.

#### **4.2.1 2030 Operating Plan**

The Northeast Corridor is the busiest passenger rail line in the United States in terms of passengers and service frequency. As the only corridor offering true high speed rail service in the country, it is a vital component of Amtrak's current and future operation. To protect its interest in the portion of the corridor that it does not own, between the Rhode Island state line and South Station, Amtrak entered into an agreement with the MBTA for the use and maintenance of the corridor. The term of this agreement extends beyond 2030. Therefore, in developing a 2030 baseline operating plan both Amtrak and the MBTA future plans for the corridor needed to be considered, consistent with their agreement.

- **MBTA - Northeast Corridor:** The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. One additional train was added during each peak period to the all of the commuter lines operating on the Northeast Corridor between South Station and Providence with the exception of the Framingham/Worcester service. This resulted in an additional four trains operating in the peak periods.
- **MBTA - Old Colony Railroad (OCRR):** The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. It was found that the current operating plan on the OCRR mainline could not support additional trains. Alternatives involving the OCRR could only be extensions of existing service unless major infrastructure improvements were to be constructed, so no additional service was added as part of the 2030 "No Build" to the OCRR.
- **Amtrak - Northeast Corridor:** The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline and then a plan formulated by Amtrak as part of a previous study in 2003 (MTA/LIRR East Side Access Project and the Metro-North/ConnDOT New Haven Line Traction Power Study) was used resulting in the following changes: add one AM departure, add one PM departure, and two PM arrivals, and subtract one AM arrival.

Think about a SCR system that should provide service for the foreseeable long-term future, yet according to **currently available** planning information the system will be at capacity by 2030 (15 years and \$1.88 billion from the completion of construction). Unless the Back Bay to Forest Hills bottleneck is broken (at an estimated \$2.4 billion cost) the MBTA **forever** will be constrained from adding more than one train during rush-hours to 4 lines, no more trains to a 5<sup>th</sup> line and will provide a total of no more than 3 trains each during rush hour for the two cities (Fall River and New Bedford) it is being built to serve. The SCR system planners appear to have missed AMTRAK's requirements. So it seems that the real SCR cost will be much higher (estimated to increase by \$2.4 billion), the real construction timeframe will be much longer, and the disruption severe. This assessment does not even take into account the AMTRAK needs for increased trains or high speed service.

L-053.04



The problem with the Mass DOT analysis is that Mass DOT did not have (or use) the 2010 information available to determine the overall future impacts on its systems or the AMTRAK system in terms of useful system life, cost and likely future disruption during the planned life of the SCR project. And apparently Mass DOT did not plan its system beyond 2030.

L-053.04

### **THE BACK BAY TO FOREST HILLS BOTTLENECK**

The SCR DEIS section, **1.4.6.2 PRACTICABILITY MEASURE**, describes significant disruption of the Orange Line service, disruption of some park land and permanent removal of other park land an increase in construction time of several years and an increase in cost of \$2.4 billion if the Attleboro Alternative is selected. **According to the SCR DEIS - all of this is caused by the need for 6 more trains inserted into the NEC system.** This section also indicates that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reviewed this alternative and considered it infeasible and sent an email to that effect to the Army Corps on March 3, 2010. **Note that this email was received prior to either AMTRAK reports noted above.**

L-053.05

The expected bottleneck between the Back Bay and the Forest Hill Stations is described on pages 23 and 24 of the SCR DEIS Executive summary a portion of which appears below (with highlights added).

#### **1.4.6.2 PRACTICABILITY MEASURE**

The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives perform well across the board on the practicability measure. The Rapid Bus alternative does not perform well on the practicability measure, particularly on the cost per rider, which has the Rapid Bus Alternative at a cost of close to \$100 per rider. The Attleboro Alternatives perform poorest overall on the practicability measure. The network simulation analysis indicated that the Attleboro Alternatives are operationally infeasible as they do not meet the MBTA on-time standard in the morning peak and would experience even worse on-time performance during the evening peak commute. The Attleboro Alternatives would also contribute to a cascading negative impact on the on-time performance of the entire southerly commuter rail system, including Worcester, Franklin, Needham and Providence commuter rail lines.

In order to address the operational infeasibility of the Attleboro Alternative, capacity on the NEC would have to be increased through construction of a fourth track along the NEC between Forest Hills Station and Back Bay Station. An analysis was conducted of the construction costs and schedule implications as well as key property and other impacts associated with the construction of a fourth track. Between Readville Station and Forest Hills Station the fourth track would be constructed on the north side of the NEC within existing real estate. Between Forest Hills Station and Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue the fourth track would be constructed on the south side of the NEC requiring demolition of the existing southern retaining wall and expansion of the existing cut section. Several Orange Line stations would need to be reconstructed in this area to accommodate the addition of the fourth track on the north side of the NEC. In addition to the multiple overhead bridge crossings, this section of the corridor contains a large amount of area where the existing track cut section is covered with parks or other recreational spaces. In these sections, the existing parks on the roofs would be removed and then replaced after the cut section has been widened. This includes Southwest Corridor Park, a 4.7 mile, 52-acre linear park stretching from Forest Hills Station to Back Bay Station that opened in 1987 and is owned and maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Permanent impacts to Southwest Corridor Park would result from the loss of 2.85 acres of parkland, and temporary impacts would include the loss of 8.54 acres of parkland throughout construction, for approximately 3-6 years at each construction zone. Existing utilities located along the corridor, including Southwest Corridor Park, on the south side of the existing tracks would need to be relocated in order to extend the cut section to the south. Between Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue and Back Bay Station the corridor enters a cut section with a structural cap that runs under the Southwest Corridor Park north towards Back Bay and along a dense urban setting with many residential and commercial buildings, including high-rise structures, in the South End abutting the right-of-way. To avoid displacement impacts to the large number of business owners and residents, the fourth track would be constructed within the right-of-way of the Orange Line. This would avoid the need to widen the cut section and demolish numerous residential and commercial properties. The MBTA Orange Line service would be relocated to a new tunnel extension under the NEC approximately two miles from just east of Back Bay to just east of Ruggles Station. This would require the reconstruction of two Orange Line stations (Massachusetts Avenue and Back Bay). In order to construct the new tunnel underneath the existing Orange Line tracks and connect in to the existing tracks at the ends, Orange Line service from Tufts Medical Center to Forest Hills would need to be suspended and replaced with bus service for two years.

The length of time it would take to complete the fourth track would be approximately 10 to ~12 years. Even considering that some of the fourth track construction activities could coincide with other construction activities for the Attleboro Alternative, the total construction period would be more than double that of any of the other alternatives under consideration, for which construction is estimated at 4 to ~5 years and would far exceed the four-year construction schedule outlined in Governor Patrick's South Coast Rail, A Plan for Action.

There are several substantial cost items associated with the construction of the fourth track, including a 1.4-mile new tunnel extension of the Orange Line and retrofitting the existing Orange Line tunnel to accommodate commuter rail trains (with new ventilation), shuttle service for two years to replace the Orange Line during construction, reconstruction of Orange Line stations and construction and reconstruction of bridges, pedestrian overpasses, cut section roofs and retaining walls, and property acquisition costs. Construction of a fourth track to avoid the above delays would result in an additional construction cost for the Attleboro Alternative of more than \$2.4B. This places it far above the other alternatives and even above the Middleborough Alternative, which was eliminated from further consideration earlier in the screening process, partially due to cost.

The potential impacts, construction costs and construction schedule and other aspects of the fourth track along the NEC would render implementation of this infrastructure requirement infeasible. In a previous study, the FRA (a cooperating federal agency) also explored the option to expand capacity of the NEC north of Canton Junction Station. However, due to substantial constraints, it was proposed that such capacity expansion end at Forest Hills in Jamaica Plain. In reviewing the RAILSIM capacity simulations conducted for the Attleboro Alternative, the FRA has indicated to the Corps that it considers this alternative infeasible and appropriate to delete from any further environmental review/ consideration. (Email correspondence from FRA to Army Corps, March 3, 2010.)

There are remarkable parallels between the lack of long range planning shown by the Mass DOT on this project and planning done by predecessor Massachusetts Transportation planners when they created the Quincy Bottleneck on the Middleboro Route (taking a four track system and making it a single train track system when the MBTA Red Line was extended).

### **SYNOPSIS OF IMPACTS OF PLANNING INCONSISTENCIES – AND REQUESTS FOR ACTION**

Based on the three factors noted above, underestimation of the number of trains AMTRAK needs, AMTRAK structural needs, and long-term expansion requirements for MBTA system, it seems inevitable that the Back Bay to Forest Hills Bottleneck will occur reasonably soon. This bottleneck is very much analogous to the bottleneck Mass DOT described on the Middleboro line at Quincy Station.

L-053.06



The problem with the Mass DOT analysis is that Mass DOT did not have (or use) the 2010 information available to determine the overall future impacts on its systems or the AMTRAK system in terms of useful system life, cost and likely future disruption during the planned life of the SCR project. It is shocking that a Massachusetts Transportation Agency would be willing to make a similar mistake (create a costly bottleneck) a second time and do it on a project where it already pointed out the past planning error.

L-053.06

Think about a SCR system that should provide service for the foreseeable long-term future, yet according to planning information will be at capacity by 2030 (15 years and \$1.88 billion after construction). Unless the Back Bay to Forest Hills bottleneck is broken (at an estimated \$2.4 billion cost) the MBTA **forever** will be constrained from adding more than one train during rush-hours to 4 lines, no more trains to a 5<sup>th</sup> line and will provide a total of no more than 3 trains each during rush hour for the two cities (Fall River and New Bedford) it is being built to serve. The SCR system planners appear to have missed AMTRAK's requirements. So it seems that the real SCR cost will be much higher (estimated to increase by \$2.4 billion), the real construction timeframe will be much longer, and the disruption severe. This total cost and timeframe exceeds the Middleboro full alternative.

#### REQUEST FOR ACTION BASED ON PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Mass DOT continues to recommend its preferred option, which will add trains on the Northeast Corridor line. This will just get the MBTA system to 2030 even while AMTRAK (in its Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor, September 2010 Report) proposes to use the same portion of the route for a much improved service between Boston and Washington DC via NYC. You'll note that AMTRAK chose to analyze an alternative that continued to provide service to Rhode Island (a state that has always had AMTRAK service). Other viable alternatives would have bypassed Rhode Island entirely.

L-053.07

Based on all the above, I request that

- the Corps of Engineers require Mass DOT to perform a more integrated analysis of this project taking account of AMTRAK and other's plans along with a longer project – and system – time horizon,
- that the Corps of Engineers require the Middleboro options (full and partial) to be put back into the group of viable options (because it may not be more costly – when taking a more realistic view of existing plans) and
- that the Corps of Engineers require a re-analysis such that the rapid bus option be considered as at least a short term measure

L-053.08

I further request that Corps of Engineers request the Federal Railroad Administration to review its March 3, 2010 decision in light of the two 2010 AMTRAK reports referenced and provide the Army Corps an updated decision. From all appearances, the FRA's decision was based on a flawed or at least outdated assessment (a 2003 report) of the potential uses and requirements of the NEC line. Please provide me with a copy of the FRA's reconsidered decision when it is received by the Army Corps.

In order to provide this reconsidered letter, it would seem that the FRA will have to weigh the competing requirements and options of Mass DOT and AMTRAK over a longer time horizon and consider and decide if

- the Mass DOT has to develop a system that does or does not include putting further stress on the NEC line between Back Bay and Forest Hills while still providing service to FR&NB and allows or does not allow the MBTA opportunity for current service expansion beyond 2030 on its NEC line
- the AMTRAK will continue to use the NEC line for current and expanded or no expansion for Acela and normal service beyond 2030 ahead of the upgraded high speed rail service
- the AMTRAK will be allowed to develop a 220 mph high speed rail system that does or does not service Rhode Island (use or not use the NEC line)

This letter will determine if

- Mass DOT has to reopen options for service to FR&NB



- AMTRAK can rely on continued use of its line to provide the kind of service it has provided with expansion of capabilities/service short of 220mph high speed rail service until the 220 mph high speed rail service is available
- AMTRAK should plan on or abandon the 220mph high speed rail route through Rhode Island

L-053.08

If the FRA determines that the SCR service will not use the NEC line, the Mass DOT will also have to reassess its Middleboro Alternative, and hopefully recognize that a rail line can be developed through Middleboro to Boston at a lower total system cost when looking at the planning time horizon available in the current reports.

This concludes the portion of this letter dealing with planning inconsistencies – and the need for further analysis.

**THE FOLLOWING ITEMS REPRESENT CONTINUED CONCERNS THAT I HAVE WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ADDRESSED.**

The Mass DOT has not done an analysis of the system taking the trains from the Stoughton line and giving them to the Attleboro line **as was recommended as an analysis that the Stoughton Board of Selectmen requested in its letter to the Army Corps of 4-13-2010.** Please require them to provide that analysis.

L-053.09

Without repeating all the information I submitted in my (January 7, 2009) letter responding to the SCR ENF and my (March 15, 2009) letter responding to the Supplemental SCR ENF in the text of this letter, I submit them as attachments for inclusion as part of my response to this DEIS (including two PowerPoint files – named “STOUGHTON CONCERNS” and “just for fun, let’s design a year 2000 transportation system” that were included in the January 7, 2009 letter.

The “STOUGHTON CONCERNS” PowerPoint presentation continues to show the severe impact the preferred option would have on the Town of Stoughton.

The need to depress the rail is very high. I don’t fault the Commonwealth’s willingness to spend a great deal for upgrades in Fall River and New Bedford, but take great offense to Mass DOT summarily setting aside the needs of Stoughton.

I request that these concerns be addressed immediately by Mass DOT – well in advance of the FEIS – so that Stoughton can review the response to these concerns and make sure that these concerns have been adequately addressed.

L-053.10

Here are other points that need to be considered:

- As a start, not having added time to review a 2500 page DEIS beyond 60 days is hard to accept.
- According to some analysts, the cost of gasoline may reach \$5 this year, and consumer pressure on the global market will likely raise the price much higher before the project is built. The effect of these cost shifts on the use of the roadway system (increased car-pooling and bus use) may decrease traffic to the point that travel times on the Route 24 roadway system will drop dramatically. **This scenario should be modeled and evaluated critically as part of the bus alternative.**
- The cost of the roadway improvements and the environmental impact of these improvements include the cost of bringing the Route 24 Interchanges up to Federal highway standards. It is my understanding that the State wants to bring the Route 24 Interchanges up to Federal highway standards anyway. **These costs and environmental impacts should not be attributed to the South Coast Rail Project.** Instead they should be part of what the State will plan to do anyway. These improvements should become the baseline evaluating the bus alternative rather than the cost of the alternative. The bus alternative should be analyzed and evaluated in this fashion.
- The State has been and is considering many options for improving its roadways and getting increased revenue to do this, including open road tolling (a method now used in other states and other countries) in recognition that the public pays a high cost for peak traffic during rush-hours. One of the effects of open road tolling would be to increase car-pooling and bus use, getting people off the



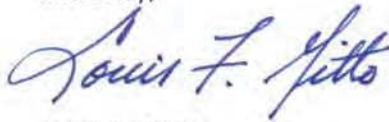
road and thus decreasing travel-time for the bus alternative. **This scenario should be modeled and evaluated critically as part of the bus alternative.**

- Construction cost per rider is huge. The Capital Cost of the Stoughton Route is \$1,884,465,000; the number of round trip riders (even including those that may switch from bus to rail) is 4790 (those called inbound riders). This computes to \$393,416.49 per rider. I believe that the DEIS indicates on a per trip basis the cost per rider on the Stoughton Electric Route is \$45.76 where SCR-DOT counts a trip as a one-way ride. On the basis of a 22 day work month and 2 way ridership, this would amount to a cost of  $22 \times 2 \times \$45.76 = \$2013.44$  {See Chapter 3, page 131, table 3.3-11}. That's a pretty high monthly cost to get one car off the road. And it is an 87% subsidy given that the zone 9 fare is \$265/month. There are better ways to use our existing transportation system at a much lower cost and environmentally beneficial manner. See note on increased car-pooling based on likely open road tolling.

L-053.10

Thank you for your careful attention to these comments and for allowing me the opportunity to participate in the process.

Sincerely,



Louis F. Gitto  
Stoughton Representative to the SCR Task Force  
Town Meeting Representative  
Stoughton Redevelopment Authority Member  
Former Selectman

Attachments: Letter from Louis F. Gitto dated January 7, 2009 with two power point presentations  
Letter from Louis F. Gitto dated March 15, 2009

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann,  
US Army Corps of Engineers, New England  
District,  
696 Virginia Road,  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

1261 West Street  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
January 7, 2009

**Re: Comments Re South Coast Rail Project NAE-2007-00698**

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I write in opposition to the selection of the Stoughton Route and offer several alternative routes that are less environmentally harmful and provide better service to the South Coast and Southeastern Massachusetts in the longer run, when considering projects to solve needed train service upgrades for the State and AMTRAK. I purposely say "in the longer run", because the South Coast Rail (SCR) project should not be looked at as an isolated decision when pitted against environmental resources that, once lost will not be regained. I believe that "the longer run" decision making is likely to be about 2 to 8 years from now, not 50 to 100 years away.

AMTRAK is now engaged in a planning process that will have to solve the capacity problem from Boston to Providence by putting in another track in at least the same area that SCR recognizes will need to be upgraded. And along the Middleboro route, the Quincy bottleneck – created by poor State Transportation planning – must be broken in order to solve the need for the increase in service if ridership on the three existing routes south of the bottleneck (Middleboro, Plymouth and Greenbush) comes to fruition and if service to Wareham and the Cape is added<sup>1</sup>. Note that solving either the AMTRAK or the Quincy bottleneck will provide service to Fall River and New Bedford (FR/NB) and either will serve a much greater total population than the Stoughton Route. My estimate for breaking the bottleneck in Quincy is that a population of about 1.2 million people (the South Shore, Cape and FR/NB) would have adequate service. I have not estimated the population served by the commuter system along the AMTRAK route (Providence, Needham, Forge Park, Stoughton, and FR/NB), but it is comparably to the South Shore, the Cape and FR/NB. By comparison, the Stoughton Route would serve a population of about 400,000, including FR/NB.

**PROJECT PURPOSE AND THE LEDPA**

**Project Purpose**

There appear to be conflicting project purposes between the US Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) and The Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation (EOT).

The Corps' purpose: to more fully meet the current and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts.

The Mass EOT purpose: to more fully meet the current and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in affected communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the Middleboro line is already over current capacity according to the SCR ENF (see page 4-18, table 4-3 "Ridership on Providence, Stoughton and Middleboro Lines").



I was/am a member of the Vision 2020 Task Force<sup>2</sup> and support the concept of “smart growth planning and development strategies” that were proposed many years ago when then Secretary of Environmental Affairs, Robert Durand, helped to establish the “Section 418” development process, that provided aid to all communities to evaluate their “build out” potential under their then-current zoning and assisted them in implement different zoning strategies so communities could develop in ways that took account of existing and proposed infrastructure, and protect areas that should not be developed. The smart growth concept is (a) not new, (b) not dependent on the South Coast Rail Project for it to be implemented, and (c) not assured to be implemented if the SCR project is developed.

Smart Growth and Green Project are terms that have been liberally sprinkled throughout the written and verbal SCR project description. As I indicate, I favor Smart Growth. Furthermore, prior to retiring from Federal Service I had been the Air Pesticides and Toxics Division Director of EPA Region 1 (New England Region) for several years, and appreciate the importance of green projects, which use resources wisely and work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When I spoke briefly at the Public Hearing in Taunton on 12/3/08, I cautioned that while smart growth and green projects are important concepts, evaluating the environmental impact of the projects relative to these terms and relative to the overall environmental burden must be carefully done<sup>3</sup>.

#### **The Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative**

It is clear that the current data from the SCR evaluation would score the Rapid Bus Option and any project through Middleboro as less environmentally damaging than the Stoughton Alternative. The question is, are these options “practicable”.

Practicability is defined by EOT as

- o Able to be completed by 2016
- o Costing at or below \$1.4 Billion
- o Travel time less than 90 minutes (all routes meet this criterion)

I will come back to these criteria in a moment to show that they may not be appropriate for making choices that forever affect an environmental resource, when it is clear that this and subsequent longer-term and necessary transportation projects cumulatively will create greater environmental harm if not properly chosen as a package.

#### **Rapid Bus**

If practicable means can they work, then let us remember that there are three existing bus lines currently operating without a dedicated lane for HOV/Bus service<sup>4</sup>. It would seem that by increasing the ability for these buses to travel in a dedicated lane during rush hours there would

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<sup>2</sup> See SERPDD web site:

<sup>3</sup> From what I have seen and read, the terms smart growth and green project have been used for this SCR project as an advertisement, rather than in a rigorous scientific manner. If the terms are to have credibility in an alternatives analysis, they must be evaluated as to impact on health and the environment and not evaluated just in terms like tons or pounds of pollutants removed from the air and water.

<sup>4</sup> DATTCO to New Bedford, Peter Pan Bus Lines to Fall River and Bloom Bus Lines to Taunton (see ENF document 4-19)



total environmental impact will be less than building the Stoughton Alternative and then building the AMTRAK expansion separately. In addition to FR/NB, the total Massachusetts population served will be much greater<sup>8</sup>. And the Rapid Bus Option will still be available for bus and HOV service that can provide more service flexibility and regional mobility than the train alone.

Can we close our eyes to the need to break the rail bottleneck in Quincy? The single rail running through that bottleneck serves the South Shore with a very large commuter population to Boston at the present time and must deal with ridership growth, is planned to be used to expand service to Wareham and Cape Cod, and will certainly serve a casino in Middleboro and the development of the South Weymouth NAS into the largest business and residential area in Southeastern Massachusetts. This bottleneck must be broken. And when it is, this line can service FR/NB. I believe Kyla Bennett, from the Town of Easton and a representative of PEER, will submit comments from work she has done showing a short term option (using Cape Rail service) to provide train service to FR/NB over this line. This may be a viable, cost effective, short-term and environmentally sound option while the larger project is designed and constructed.

Is it possible to believe that this project to break the bottleneck in Quincy will not be built? Should we wait while we spend \$1.4 billion on an environmentally damaging project through Stoughton and only then plan to build this project and spend what will be even more than the projected \$3.4 billion?

So with those views as a backdrop, I ask that you keep the Attleboro option and the Full Middleboro option both on the table for the full Federal and State environmental analysis.

#### IMPACTS OF BUILDING THE SCR PROJECT THROUGH STOUGHTON

**Little attention has been paid to the impact of building the project through Stoughton.**

Stoughton is considered to "have train service", therefore why spend time looking at the impacts further? Even the presentations of alternatives failed to show the double track construction north of the Stoughton Train Station. I have enclosed a CD that I wish to be part of the record that shows this overlooked expansion, shows pictures and notations of locations in Stoughton and surrounding towns and depicts the concerns that I mention. It also includes some likely mitigation measures.

If the project is built through Stoughton,

- there would be a double track through the entire town, where at present there is one track through only half the town,
- passenger trains that are slowing down to make their last stop at the end of the line would continue, some without stopping, and
- freight trains that are either non-existent or are a very rare occurrence in downtown Stoughton would be a common occurrence and very long.

There has not been through train service for over 50 years – in which time the town has grown from about 10,000 to 30,000, where not every family had a car to now where almost everyone has a car - increasing traffic much beyond the increase in population.

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<sup>8</sup> The service improvements will help the Needham Line, the Forge Park Line, the Providence/Attleboro Line, and the Stoughton Line because all use part of the AMTRAK system.



Yet no attention seems to be paid to the facts that

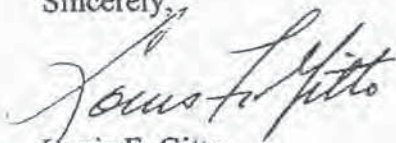
- The train will pass through the center of the town close to and parallel to Route 138 to the south of the Train Station and then close to and parallel to Route 27 to the north.
- There are 8 at-grade crossings in less than 2 miles, 4 of these within about 0.3 miles in the center of the town with little space to stack vehicles when trains come through.
- There currently are significant traffic delays in Stoughton Center; where route 138, route 27 and route 139 all converge and cross within an extremely short distance.
- The track is also near three schools, the West Elementary School, the O'Donnell Middle School and the Stoughton High School.
- There may be significant freight service on this line that has not even been addressed or confronted; yet at the public hearing in Taunton on 12/3/2008, this was a significant topic of interest from the more southern communities in that area looking for commercial expansion.

There are significant safety concerns relating to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic as well as traffic flow issues. There are enormous social concerns relating to the erection of catenary supports and electric wires for electrified trains (that will come either immediately or over the long-term operation of the system). Stoughton is not a rich community; in fact it has environmental justice areas within its borders. Stoughton does have a downtown overlay district designed to create business opportunities and higher density residential development within walking distance of business and transportation. But Stoughton needs an inviting environment in which to prosper. Creating an environment that produces traffic congestion, safety concerns and an uninviting visual effect does nothing positive for the community. Instead it shifts the social overhead costs from a few people who ride the train onto a Stoughton population that is saddled with the disbenefits 24/7.

There are no easy solutions to the traffic, safety and visual problems that this project, if built through Stoughton, would impose on this community. But the solutions may include putting the rail line below the grade of the roadways from south of Plain Street to north of either School Street or Simpson Street. That would solve some of the at-grade crossing problems. It may solve the problems of unsightly catenary towers and electric wires through the down town. There remain many issues of freight transport of materials that are unsafe in a train accident situation, hazardous waste transport, aesthetics, noise, vibration, maintenance of wildlife corridors, Train Station (location, amenities and parking), etc. that must be addressed.

Thank you for your careful attention to these comments.

Sincerely,



Louis F. Gitto

Stoughton Representative to the SCR Task Force  
Town Meeting Representative and  
Former Selectman

Enclosure: CD with contents to be included in the record





#### IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR STOUGHTON

- PEDESTRIAN TRACK CROSSING AT OUR TRAIN STATION & AT OTHER CROSSINGS
- PROJECT CAN BE ELECTRIC OR DIESEL
  - (DECISION CAN CHANGE AFTER PROJECT IS BUILT – THERE CAN BE NO GUARANTEES)
- FREIGHT TRAINS & ASSOCIATED HAZARDS QUITE POSSIBLE
- CHILDREN'S SAFETY NEAR SCHOOLS
- **The burden is on Stoughton & the effect on Stoughton is forever**

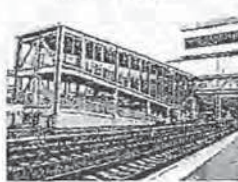
#### PEDESTRIAN TRACK CROSSING

We can't build Bridge like Sharon  
Canton's option is unsightly  
Consider the number of crossings close to the Town Center

Sharon Bridge



Canton Overpass



#### Stoughton & Canton Station Areas



#### Double Tracks Canton & Stoughton



#### SLOW FREIGHT - HIGH SPEED NON-STOP TRAINS

Traffic congestion and safety  
Unknown materials

**DON'T JUST THINK OF PRESENT –  
IN FUTURE WE'LL HAVE MANY  
TRAINS**



Let's call out our B Grade Crossings

Central St, Simpson St,  
**School St, Porter/Canton Sts.,**  
**Wyman St, Brock St,**  
Plain St, and Morton St  
4 DOWNTOWN in about a third of a mile.

**School & Cushing Streets**  
**VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS**

Short stacking from Canton Street  
Cushing St intersection dangerous -can block traffic.



**Porter, Rose & Canton Streets**

Congestion & Pedestrian problems Porter Street & In Square  
dangers – due to Slow Freight & non-stop high speed trains



**Wyman, Morton & Summer Streets**

Similar congestion and pedestrian problems as Porter  
Street



**Brock Street - near Rt 138.**

No place to stack traffic.  
Not as much foot traffic – some school-kids There's  
room to depress train line.



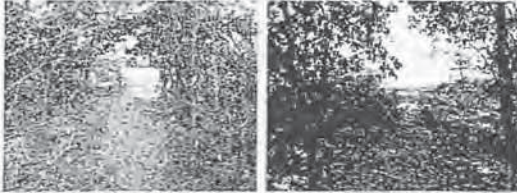
**Plain Street**

Stacking problems from Route 138  
Icing in winter coming down hill on Plain Street There is  
sufficient height to depress train line



### **CHILDREN'S SAFETY**

Walking Routes to School Over Tracks  
Middle School & HS



The Army CoE will make the environmental  
decision on the route based on

### **THE LEAST ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE THE LEDPA**

### **STOUGHTON ROUTE – WHAT SHOULD THE TOWN BE LIKE IN 20 – 40 YEARS**

- I'd want the electric option scoped out and planned for – less pollution, quieter, faster, likely in long-run
- Make sure passengers and pedestrians can get across tracks safely (Sharon has bridge – Canton has a monstrosity)
- Make sure train and car/truck traffic can coexist, few or no grade crossings
- Make sure current residents homes are protected – Can almost touch houses on Greenbush line – take the trip

### **STOUGHTON REQUIREMENTS**

The plan for rail in New Bedford calls for the train to be elevated at the downtown Whale's Tooth Station.  
STOUGHTON SHOULD GET THE RAIL DEPRESSED

- Depress rail from about Simpson Street to beyond Plain Street
- Re-route Route 27 to avoid cross traffic
- Create (probably) two streets parallel to Rte 138 to develop better downtown development configuration
- AND Bring a large governmental agency to downtown



### It was easy to design a system to get people to use public transportation in the 1800's

- The top map shows the Stoughton Train Station in 1890 – note the horse and wagons
- The bottom map shows the North Easton Train Station in 1855 – with the train ending at the Ames Shovel Factory that equipped the gold rush and the Train expansion
- Not hard to get people and goods to use the train – the horses were slow and got tired fast



### Not as easy to design a system to get people to use public transportation in the 2000's

- **HERE'S THE COMPETITION**
- People have more choices, demand more.
- Need to get people where they want to go, when they want to go and do it at a price they are willing to pay for the service.
- Public transportation is nice if it stops near your work, if you have a fixed schedule, and if you aren't responsible for dealing with emergencies at home.

**The 2009 Nissan Versa Sedan**  
34 mpg hwy\*. Room for five.



Starting at \$9,990

St. Joseph's Hospital Parking Garage





### So what's your 2000's public transportation design?

- In the 1800's, people invested in the Railroad to make money.
- In the 2000's, can we create a system that at least gets a lot of people to use it?
- These numbers are not precise. But they are close enough for demonstration purposes. To the right is **Route 24** with an estimated daily traffic volume of 122,000 (ENF section 2.4.1) and a potential rail ridership estimate of about 4000. Less than a 3.33% capture rate really is not great success.
- Is this the future?



### So what's your 2000's public transportation design?

Car-pool, Vans, Acela

FILL IN THE PICTURE SPACES

What ridership segment (%) do you expect to capture?

What will your solution do  
to help the Massachusetts economy and the environment?



Secretary Ian Bowles, BEA,  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling Eglington)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900,  
Boston, MA 02114

1261 West Street  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
15 March, 2009

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann,  
US Army Corps of Engineers, New England  
District,  
696 Virginia Road,  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Secretary Bowles and Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I write again in opposition to the South Coast Rail (SCR) project. These comments debunk this proposal and show the extravagant waste of public funds to support a political promise. Let us not lose sight of the principal project purpose – to transport people from Fall River and New Bedford to Boston. There is a lot of slight of hand to distract attention – but why propose a rail line if not for this principal purpose?

I apologize to those readers who do not have the Supplemental Ridership Memorandum of 13 February and the undated corrected table #1 in front of them to follow this discussion. It would be too ponderous a letter to repeat the material in those documents. The addressees have this material.

I sent comments on the initial ENF for the South Coast Rail on 7 January 2009. I will not repeat those comments except to say that the train represents a nineteenth century solution to a 21<sup>st</sup> century problem. In the nineteenth century, the train was competing with the horse and wagon and was a welcome convenience and truly great advance in transportation technology. In our 21<sup>st</sup> century, the train is competing with cars and trucks, and is neither more convenient, nor an advance in technology. You know that 21<sup>st</sup> century people in the USA are used to being able to come and go as they choose, defining their own schedule. Most people have responsibilities at home as well as work and have built their lives around their ability to juggle their many responsibilities. I have two married daughters with young children and see firsthand how each parent has to be able to react to the requirements to pick up a sick child at school, to adjust their work schedules to meet the needs of their children to get to "practice", etc. The train does not allow this kind of flexibility, thus it is a poor competitor in the transportation realm. You will see the effect of this reality if you are willing to take an honest look at the traveler numbers shown in the supplemental ENF. These numbers show that there are fewer than 3000 new riders per day that will use any of the train or bus options proposed and of these approximately 3000 new riders, about 1500 will come from those people taking private bus service who will switch to a SCR option (see the attached email communications with Scott Peterson, CTPS planning modeler for the SCR project).

Let me remind you that the proposed project cost is \$1.4 billion. The numbers I will present to you indicate that the Governor is willing to spend about \$1 million (\$1,000,000) per new public transportation rider. To do this, he wants to devote over 10% of his proposed gas tax increase to this project.

I would point out that I am on the MAPC legislative committee, and last month argued strongly that the gas tax needed a greater increase than the Governor proposed because of the deplorable state of our transportation system and because Massachusetts must have a first class transportation system if it is to be economically competitive and provide economic opportunity for its citizens. There were others on the committee who wisely said, 'people distrust the government to spend their tax money wisely and because of this distrust, they do not want their



taxes increased'. As Billy Joel noted, it really is just a matter of trust. And this South Coast Rail project just doesn't measure up on the trust scale.

Table 2 of the Supplemental ENF filed on February 17 shows the "Daily Linked Trips" for various transportation alternatives. A linked trip is a person traveling from point A to point B. There is a separate linked trip for that same person to get from point B back to point A. So for a commuter traveling to Boston (point B) from Fall River, New Bedford or Taunton (points A in this analysis), this would constitute 2 linked trips. And from the email communication with Scott Peterson (referenced above) about 1500 riders (3000 linked trips) are from people leaving the private bus services and choosing one of these public options instead. If we look at table 2 from the perspective of accounting for the definition of linked trips and transfer of riders from private bus to one of the SCR options noted above we would see the new public transit ridership the SCR proposals will attract for the \$1.4 billion dollar expense.

TABLE 2: Daily new public transit riders (not those switching from current regional or private bus service) to and from Boston because of building one of the following options

OPTION	Attleboro diesel	Attleboro electric	Middleboro full build	Middlebor o simple	Stoughton diesel	Stoughton electric	Rapid Bus
# New public transit riders	850	1350	950	700	1000	1450	250

The highest number of new riders in this table is 1,450. The project cost of \$1.4 billion represents about \$1 million (\$1,000,000) per new rider. It is disheartening to me that a Governor, who showed such great promise, would be as cavalier with the use of your money as a taxpayer and mine.

But that is not all. The project is being "sold" as an economic stimulus. At the most recent South Coast Rail Task Force meeting, Secretary of Transportation Alioto indicated that the bus route was not an acceptable alternative. It wouldn't provide the promise the Governor made to the South Coast elected officials. It would not generate the kind of economic regeneration of an area around a bus station that would occur around a train station. And at the same meeting, the South Coast Rail project manager, Kristina Egan said, there would be no tunnels or depressed rail as there was in the Greenbush project; the cost would be too great. The other "selling point" is that the train will reduce vehicle miles traveled, and thus reduce air pollution.

Let's look a little deeper into each of these claims.

Remember the principal project purpose - people need to get to Boston quickly from Fall River& New Bedford and the area needs economic stimulus. From the corrected "Service Assumptions" Table 1, the High Speed Bus is faster by about 9 minutes (12%) than the fastest train option. The cost for the bus option is about \$0.5 Billion - the remainder of the \$1.4 billion project cost could be used as a stimulus in the Downtown areas of FR/NB. This is not acceptable to the administration. The Governor indicates - a train is the answer.

Let's look a little deeper into the environmental benefit claim - clean air as the environmental benefit from the project - versus destruction of a large portion of a wetland that is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Table 5 of the Supplemental ENF entitled "Changes in Peak Period VMT" (note VMT means vehicle miles traveled) shows a total VMT in 2030 of 57,916,400. The reduction in VMT for the Stoughton and the Attleboro alternatives are roughly the same. The Stoughton alternative shows a VMT reduction from the no build option of 241,900. That is a VMT reduction of 0.418%. Remember at the outset, I said that the train was not competitive with the car. Attracting less than 1500 people and reducing the pollution level from auto traffic from this project by less than a half percent isn't something that dreams are built on. At the same time, this project (if the Stoughton Route is chosen) will pass



through miles of the Hockomock Swamp and destroy a large portion of a shaded wetland, the most productive kind. This will be a tangible and irreplaceable effect. The small reduction in VMT can be obtained through many other, less destructive governmental actions. What environmental analyst would make the tradeoff between a real and irretrievable loss of an ACEC wetland and a small VMT reduction that could be obtained in many ways?

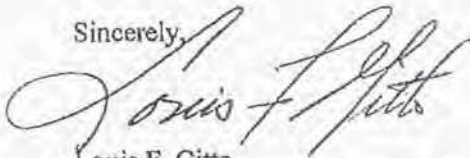
Let's examine the notion that depressing the rail bed in Stoughton would be too costly (if that route is chosen). It seems that there is no concern with the costly use of taxpayer money to satisfy a political promise. It is equally outrageous that the Governor would have callous disregard to the effect that the decision would have on an entire community of 28,000 people. Stoughton has 9 grade crossings, 4 of which are within 0.3 of a mile and in the center of town. The downtown is notorious for its traffic problems, even without the through-train. If the Governor can spend a million dollars per new public transit rider from the FR/NB area, then as a matter of equity – which is a reason for promoting this rail line – he could spend (tongue in cheek) \$28 billion on Stoughton – quite a stimulus indeed. But more realistically, the cost of depressing the line should be the cost of doing business. "The creation of new at-grade crossings is not a preferred approach to addressing highway mobility." This quote is from the Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook - Revised Second Edition August 2007 by US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. How could the Executive Office of Transportation not know this? The line will be in place forever and will adversely affect the town. To not only dismiss the notion out of hand, but to not have decided to depress the rail line when creating the original design shows how little caring the administration has for the citizens it should be protecting.

As a Stoughton citizen, Stoughton's representative to the South Coast Rail Task Force, someone who has spent extensive time in government at the local, state and federal levels, and a person who has devoted his entire working career to environmental protection, I am extremely disappointed in the disdain of the Administration for the environment, the use of taxpayer's dollars, and the lack of concern for the impact on the Town of Stoughton if this train route is chosen. From the items noted above, any route would be irresponsible, but the Stoughton Route is particularly egregious.

Secretary Alioto indicated at the SCR meeting on Wednesday, 11 March, in Taunton that the administration would listen to the will of the elected State Senators and Representatives and to the Mayors and other elected officials in making its determination of the rail route to be chosen. I believe this to be true. That is precisely why there is another branch of government where the people can be heard. If the Stoughton route is chosen, the train through Stoughton should be depressed to avoid the safety and traffic concerns.

Thank you for your careful attention to these comments and for allowing me the opportunity to participate in the process.

Sincerely,



Louis F. Gitto  
Stoughton Representative to the SCR Task Force  
Town Meeting Representative and  
Former Selectman

Attachment: 10 March 2009 - Email exchange between Lou Gitto and Scott Peterson.



Attachment: 10 March 2009 - Email exchange between Lou Gitto and Scott Peterson,

From: Scott Peterson [mailto:scott@ctps.org]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2009 10:49 AM  
To: Gitto, Lou (DEP)  
Cc: Egan, Kristina (BOT)  
Subject: Re: SCR - Questions re your 2/13/09 Report

Hello Lou,

In response to your questions:

1) A linked transit trip is a trip produced in one TAZ and attracted to another TAZ, regardless of the number of transit modes they take.

An example: If there are 4,700 new linked transit trips for the Attleboro Local Diesel option, for simplicity that could mean 2,350 trips from peoples homes in the SCR study area destined to work in Boston (although their destinations could be other locations) and then 2,350 homebound linked transit trips, with no intermediate stops, just transfers between other transit modes if they were needed to get to their destination.

2) Boardings are counted for each transit mode a person gets on. You are correct in the example you gave, one linked transit trip could have 1 commuter boarding and 1 subway boarding (2 total) to get to their destination. On the homebound trip, it would be the same in reverse. So that would translate into 1 person commuting daily, making 2 daily linked transit trips, accounting for 4 daily boardings on the transit system.

The private bus ridership does get reduced in all of the alternatives to varying degrees. The Bus Rapid Transit option has the existing private buses in the background and their ridership is small.

3) The private bus ridership in the No-build/TSM is about 4,000 boardings daily (2000 in/2000 out). All of the build alternatives have a scaled back private bus service running similar to today's service. In all of the alternatives except the Middleboro options, the private bus ridership goes down to around 500 (plus or minus a few hundred). The Middleboro Full build option has about 500 hundred more private bus riders than the other options and the Simple option has around 2,000 private bus riders.

Hope this helps, let me know if you have any more questions.

Scott

----- Original Message -----

From: Gitto, Lou (DEP)  
To: Scott Peterson  
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2009 7:05 AM  
Subject: SCR - Questions re your 2/13/09 Report

Scott,

Here are my initial questions regarding the material in your 2/13/09 report to South Coast Rail Project Manager Kristina Egan..

1. I am confused over the definition of "Daily linked Trips" in Table 2.

o Is a single linked trip a one-way trip to Boston (and other side trips), with the home-bound trip counted as a second trip?

o Or is the round-trip (home to Boston to home ... with intervening stops) one linked trip?

2. I am confused over the definition of "Boardings by Mode" in Table 3.

o Is a "boarding by mode" an event where a person gets on a train as part of a trip to go to work – and if she then gets on a subway is that a second boarding on the same trip? And if the process is repeated in reverse (subway to train to home) does the round-trip consist of 4 boardings? I notice that you only are counting the train and rapid bus boardings, so you are not getting into the details of a trip.

o In this table you show the rapid bus boardings of 6,800. Have you determined if these boardings reduce the boardings for the private bus service? And do the trains decrease the private bus service trips as well – and to a greater or lesser degree?

3. In Table 5 I presume that the "no build option" includes private bus service. In the other options, has (some or all of) that service been switched to the trains? If so how much? If not, why not?

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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:07 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: Request for more time to review the South Coast Rail DEIS (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** Lou Gitto [mailto:lgitto@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 01, 2011 3:50 PM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Cc:** timmermann.timothy@epa.gov; George Pucci  
**Subject:** Request for more time to review the South Coast Rail DEIS

Alan,

Given that the DEIS on the South Coast Rail is over 2,500 pages, I respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. **Specifically, I request an additional 60 days.**

I received a hard copy of the document on Monday of this week. There is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. In reviewing correspondence on this project, I note that Mass EOT requested that the MEPA office defer issuing a Certificate on the ENF and a Scope for the State DEIR on January 29, 2009 and promptly received a time extension on January 30, 2009 in order to provide supplemental information. To require the public, which has less familiarity with the project, to review the document and submit comments in such a short timeframe - on its face - seems unreasonable for such a voluminous document and for a project with such far-reaching implications. Now I know that you have been very meticulous in dealing with this project, and thank you for your effort. It has taken well over 2 years to get to this point. A 60-day extension for public input seems very reasonable.

E-012.01

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Louis Gitto  
1261 West Street  
Stoughton, MA 02072

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



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**From:** Mary Jane Golden [maryjanegolden@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 11:28 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Comments About the DESI/DEIR-Southcoast Rail Project

Good Morning Alan,

I live in South Dartmouth, MA and have been following the progress of the South Coast Rail project very closely.

I believe that the Southcoast Rail will have tremendous economic implications for the greater New Bedford area, which sorely needs economic relief. People can get and keep jobs in Boston and still live in the scenic Southcoast, where they will spend their wages in local businesses. It will be the lifeblood of this region.

E-059.01

I support the Stoughton Alternative with electric mode to best meet the future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston. I believe, after fully reading the study, that this alternative best balances transportation and environmental benefits with environmental impacts.

Thank you.

Mary Jane Golden, 28 Country Way, South Dartmouth, MA 02748  
508-997-9381

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**From:** Ca chalot96@aol.com

**Sent:** Thursday, May 26, 2011 9:58 AM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** South Coast Rail

I am witting to show support for the Commuter rail project. I beliefs that the Stoughton Alternative with diesel and electric engines is the best possible way to keep the environmental impact and greatly adding to the opportunities to Fall River and New Bedford.

E-052.01

The last passenger train left new Bedford in 1959, I was nine. I am now 61, the time for waiting should be over and ending the public review on May 27 th, 2011.

Thank you,  
David L. Goldrick  
78 Wing rd.  
Acushnet, Ma  
02743  
508-998-2981

Guillermo Gonzalez

74 Hawthorn Street

New Bedford, MA 02740

guillermogonzalezmd@comcast.net

April 28, 2011

Dear Mr. Anacheke- Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with my personal commentaries regarding the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement Report. I am a 61 year old psychiatrist living and working in the City of New Bedford. I have 35 years of experience in the practice of Community Psychiatry. I have practiced in San Juan, Puerto Rico as well as Brooklyn, New York, and for the past 20 years, here in New Bedford, MA.

It could be somewhat surprising to you hearing about the psychological reasons for my support for this public transportation project. The environmental impact cannot be clearly studied and assessed if the social human environment impact is not properly assessed. My support for this project that will have a very significant psychological impact on the entire southeastern Massachusetts population starts with selfish reasons. Up to this time, everything outside route 495 is perceived as another place; not part of Boston. We rely on private transportation and a few buses to connect to Boston. The main scientific, medical, psychiatric and academic activity occurs in Boston. At my age, I will prefer to delegate the driving part and be able to study while being transported to Boston in an efficient and fast public mode of transportation.

L-009.01

While there is a sense of personal partial disconnect between my professional activity and the one that is happening in Boston, it is also true that on a larger macro-social scale, the same thing happens between the population in Boston and us here in "outside Boston"; New Bedford's population. My intention is not of accusing a lesser priority level for us "outside of Boston" regarding transportation projects, but to encourage the consideration of the improvement of the sense of belonging of the population of New Bedford as part of the state of Massachusetts. The benefits for us are not limited to the ease of transportation,


MAY 12 2011 REG DIV



increased economical activity and increased access to jobs and professional activities, but also the sense of pride of being an integral and important region of Massachusetts.

L-009.01

I hope that in your final report you address the environmental impact of the South Coast Rail project and the psychological benefits to the self-esteem and to the feelings of the South Coastal population of being an integral and important part of the population of Massachusetts.



Guillermo Gonzalez.

May 27, 2011

via Email

Mr. Alan Anachecka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754  
SCREIS@USACE.army.mil

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
Attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report DEIS/DEIR  
South Coast Rail Project

Dear Mr. Anachecka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

When I accepted the appointment to serve as Lakeville's representative on the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force my instructions were to take whatever action necessary to insure the adequate protection of Lakeville's natural resources should the rail extension ever come to fruition. I am pleased to see my Town's natural and cultural resources now more completely recognized by the South Coast Commuter Rail Project. The DEIS/DEIR identifies Lakeville as part of the Southern Triangle. Impacts due to the improvement or reconstruction of the existing tracks in the Southern Triangle will be the same for all rail alternatives. Comments made apply to all rail alternatives. My comments on the combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) follow.

In general, for a document the size of the DEIS/DEIR, the comment period was too short. As a result of the timing, my comments deal only with issues in Lakeville. The maps used for resources in the Assonet Cedar Swamp are difficult to read. Inconsistencies or discrepancies in the DEIS/DEIR makes the document difficult to understand.

L-069.01

• *The Executive Summary Page 1-9 Southern Triangle Rail Infrastructure New Bedford Main Line:* states "...single track with three sidings from Myricks Junction to New Bedford." *Page 3-64 New Bedford Main Line Track Infrastructure* states "A short segment of the line would be double track south of Myricks Junction, 0.8 miles. The remainder of the line would be single-track, with the exception of 1.8-mile double-track section in Freetown and a 2.7-mile section in New Bedford." And then on *Page 4.18-10 Table 4.18-5 Non-Tidal River and Stream Crossing - New Bedford Main Line Waterbody:*

L-069.02

*Cedar Swamp (River?) Improvements: Expansion to 2 tracks.* **Will there be double tracks through the Assonet Cedar Swamp?** L-069.02

- *Page 3-37, Table 3.2-16 Summary of Railroad Bridges – New Bedford Main Line* does not show all bridges that carry the rail line through the Assonet Cedar Swamp, in particular, the stone bridge over the unnamed stream just south of Peirce Brook.

- *Page 4.1-8 Grade Crossings*, a new grade crossing is mentioned for Lakeville. **Where would this new grade crossing be?**

- *Page 4.1-85 (Berkley's) Mill Street and Adams Lane private crossings are proposed to be closed. Page 4.8-12 says "The Pierce (Peirce) and Haskins Cemetery (Map No. La.024), which is located 200 feet east of the Fall River Secondary right-of-way and is accessible from Adams Lane in Berkley, contains approximately 45 slate and granite headstones dating from 1785 to 1892. Page 4.8-38/39 says "specific areas and resources could require sound insulation or barrier mitigation to reduce noise impacts. An elastic mat may be placed under the ballast to absorb or reduce vibration levels" Listed is Adams Lane grade crossing: Peirce and Haskins Cemetery, Lakeville. Will the Adams Lane crossing be closed? If so how will Lakeville access this historic cemetery?* L-069.03

- *Page 4.10-7 Private Open Space* states "1,000-acre parcel...in Lakeville," **The Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary crosses the town line into Freetown.** "The Fall River Secondary passes nearby" **Fall River Secondary passes through the western edge of the Sanctuary.** "This property, which is not opened to the public..." Sanctuary does not post No Trespassing signs. Signs posted identify property as Massachusetts Audubon Society and list permitted activities. The issue with public use is access. Very few access points exist. L-069.04

- *Page 4.14-100 "The CAPS analysis shows.....The higher rates of train traffic on the New Bedford Main Line and the Fall River Secondary would result in a slight decrease in connectivity through the Assonet Cedar Swamp area in Lakeville when compared to the existing connectedness." Page 4.1-18 Mass Coastal Freight Operation "New Bedford is serviced two days per week (except during "sludge season", when it is serviced three times per week), typically Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fall River is serviced three days per week (except during "sludge season", when it is serviced two days per week), typically Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays." I find it difficult to believe that the planned increase in the number and speed of trains travelling through the Assonet Cedar Swamp will result in only a slight decrease in connectivity. Any fencing will also decrease connectivity.* L-069.05

- *Page 4.16-18/19 Wetlands Along the Rail Right-of-Way Through Lakeville* states "The Assonet River and Cedar Swamp River both flow under the New Bedford Branch of the right-of-way in Cedar Swamp" L-069.06



(Wetland LK-6 and LK-7)." There appears to be some confusion with names of water bodies within the Assonet Cedar Swamp. The river that flows through the Assonet Cedar Swamp is shown as the Assonet River on the 1831 map of the area, the name Cedar Swamp River does not appear until an 1879 map. The Cedar Swamp River is the Assonet River. The perennial stream that crosses the rail line approximately four tenths of a mile south of Malbone Street is Peirce Brook. I have other issues with wetland resources along both the New Bedford and Fall River lines. An Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation is currently before the Lakeville Conservation Commission; these issues will be addressed there.

L-069.06

In conclusion, it is my belief that the re-establishment of commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River will have far greater impacts on the Town of Lakeville, its citizens and its natural resources than the DEIS/DEIR indicates. Those impacts will extend well beyond the footprint of the rail lines. I support public transportation and the South Coast Rail Project. I believe this project can be built in a way that will protect the natural and cultural resources of Lakeville. I don't believe we need to choose between the two. I want to believe we can do both.

L-069.07

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report. I would like to extend a special thank you to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers for preparing the Draft Environmental Statement under what I think at times were difficult circumstances.

Sincerely,

Linda Grubb  
22 Pierce Avenue  
Lakeville, MA 02347-1801

Cc: Kristina Egan, MassDOT

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**From:** wendy hanawalt [wendyhanawalt@mac.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2011 8:54 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail Comments

E-032.01

I've been an Easton resident for over 20 years. I just wanted to add my voice to the comments about the proposed South Coast Rail planned to go through Easton. You probably don't hear a lot of these comments, but I'd just like to say that I'm IN FAVOR of the rail line.

I live fairly close to where the train will run through town. While I certainly can appreciate the concerns of the residents near the line and hope that you do whatever is possible to mitigate their concerns, I think quick and easy access to Boston by public transportation is absolutely crucial, for a number of reasons. For one, it decreases our dependency on gas and eases the traffic on our highways. But, from a selfish point of view, it dramatically increases the ability of working people to seek employment where it exists: in the metropolitan Boston area. I, for one, welcome the opportunity to seek employment in Boston without having to worry about the expense, time, and trouble of commuting by automobile. While I appreciate people's concern about the historic value of Easton's downtown buildings, I think we have to look forward, not backward, when contemplating such projects.

Thanks for your time.

Wendy Hanawalt  
15 Whittier Lane  
North Easton, MA 02356

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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:06 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: Southcoast Rail (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

-----Original Message-----

From: David Hardy [mailto:riverwave@comcast.net]  
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2011 2:31 PM  
To: Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
Cc: Timmermann.Timothy@epa.gov  
Subject: Southcoast Rail

Dear Sirs,

I have been a resident of Easton for 24 years, raised a family here, and am now retired, ready to enjoy this wonderful land. I and my wife have observed many of the policy issues being developed over time for this region. The Southcoast Rail is by far the most important decision this area has faced, maybe ever.

I struggle with digesting all the materials in the 2,500 page document (like the Federal Budget). and am requesting a delay so residents such as me and my wife can more fully understand the implications and issues.

E-013.01

Given that the DEIS on the SouthCoast rail is over 2,500 pages, I and my family respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

David Hardy  
11 Olde Farm Road  
South Easton, MA 02375  
508-238-0281

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



April 27, 2011

✓ Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

I am writing to comment on the South Coast Rail Draft Environment Impact Report. I read the Executive Summary disseminated from February 2011 with great interest. From my reading, the electric train in the Stoughton pathway seems the clear alternative for environmental impact, population served with the least disruption to domestic and business pursuits.

I live in Mattapoisett and there is this story about Oliver Wendell Holmes, a great jurist and summer resident of the town. It was said that he left his home at 9:00 am, travelled by the "Dude Special" – a train to Boston and ended up at his office in Cambridge by 11:00 am. He started back at 3:00 to repeat the process and was home by 5:00 pm. So, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was possible to accomplish a feat that is no longer possible – either by using rail technology, or by the clock with summer traffic. L-008.01

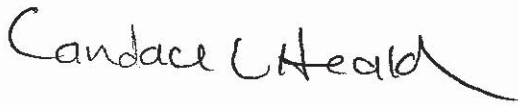
The railroad linkages and the local electric train formed the backbone of the southern coastal communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries after the age of sail. The local school for advance students closed in 1901 because the electric cars had come to the village and those students were now able to attend the newly built Fairhaven High School – it was an economy of scale and size no longer possible. Local residents took the rail from Marion and Mattapoisett to come into New Bedford to shop and have lunch – again, a connection no longer possible by public transport with the time and directionality of the busses.

The linkages promoted between residents, commerce and cities of all sizes has been fractured over time. We have not seen progress, but regression. The South Coast Rail Project offers a chance to move forward in a climate of environmental concern and economic pressure with the rising prices of fossil fuels.

I would urge this project forward.

My best,

Dr. Candace Heald  
PO Box 502  
Mattapoisett, MA 02739



MAY 5'11 REG DIV

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**From:** Gil Heino [gheino@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 11, 2011 7:56 PM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** RE: South East Rail Line

Dear Mr. Nasemann,

It is with great sadness and concern that I'm writing this letter in regards to the route preferred by the State of Massachusetts for the Southeast Rail line.

First of all I must be up front and state that our home is right on the rail line and probably the worst location of any home in Easton. We are only feet from the line and the crossing is also only feet from our property on Elm Street, so the bells and whistles would be very detrimental to our environment.

You may think that the location of our property is the primary reason that we are opposing the rail, but it is not. Easton is a very small community and the rail will change the entire atmosphere of our town. I am getting to an age where I probably will never see the completion of the line, so my biggest concern is for future generations, generations who will never experience a small historic town because a massive commuter rail will be bisecting the town and polluting our air with diesel fuel exhaust. The impact to the Hockomock Swamp, a major source of water, could be severely compromised with a fuel spillage.

E-030.01

I realize that decisions of this kind are somewhat political instead of what is best for the environment or for the citizens, and it saddens me to say that.

I have faith that the Army Corps of Engineers will base their decision on the facts and will give great consideration to a small historic community that will forever be changed by a commuter rail speeding through our small rural town.

Thanks for you consideration

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Heino  
28 Elm Street  
North Easton, MA.  
02356

gheino@comcast.net

DEAR ALAN,

I AM WRITING YOU FOR ANY MAPS OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOUTH COAST RAIL GOING BY MY HOME AT 156 PLAIN ST. TAUNTON, MASS. 02780. THERE ARE CURRENTLY TWO TRACKS BEHIND MY HOUSE IS THAT GOING TO STAY THE SAME, IS THERE GOING TO BE ANY SOUND PROOF WALLS PUT UP ETC!! I CAN'T MAKE THE DATES OF THE TWO MEETINGS, SO ANY INFO YOU CAN PROVIDE ME WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. ALSO A STATION IS PROPOSED NOT TOO FAR FROM MY HOME IS THIS GOING TO IMPACT OUR AREA ON PLAIN ST.

THANKS AGAIN,

JIM HEBERT

L-005.01

HEBERT  
156 PLAIN ST  
TAUNTON, MA 02780

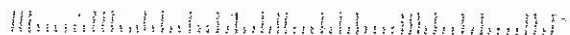
PROVIDENCE RI 02909  
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MR. ALAN ANACHEKA - NASEMANN  
ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
696 VIRGINIA ROAD  
CONCORD, MASS. 01742

APR 5/11 REG DIV

01742+2751





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**From:** alan johnson [cru2404@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2011 4:49 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** Southcoast rail

I live in the town of Acushnet and I am strongly opposed to the southcoast rail project. The idea of creating a railroad through protected areas is not what should be done.

The cost is not something the tax payers should be burdened with at this time. The idea that the railroad

would be turned over to the one of the biggest on going deficit bodies in the commonwealth, (MBTA) is even worse.

Please do not build or continue this project.

Thank you,  
Alan Johnson

E-069.01

Michael Jolliffe  
P.O. Box 1884  
Mattapoisett MA 02739

Tel-508-758-1346

e-mail- [randmi@verizon.net](mailto:randmi@verizon.net)

26 May 2011

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

I am enclosing comments on the Draft EIS and EIP on the South Coast Rail project proposed by Mass DOT presented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - New England Division dated February 2011. I have been interested in this project for several years and believe its implementation is of critical importance to the welfare of this area. As a civil engineer, I consider my overall experience and a close relationship with planners who have extensive experience with high-speed rail in Europe justifies the comments and observations and ideas I attempt to convey in the documents I am enclosing with this letter.

I support the Stoughton Electric approach, which is a good beginning to the access we need, assuming the terminus-to-terminus speed can be significantly improved. As conveyed in my comments, there are opportunities that exist which can be simply and economically applied and lead to very favorable environmental outcomes. These are not only for the fauna and flora that occupy the earth but also for the Homo sapiens who travel on its surface and choose to protect it.

L-094.01

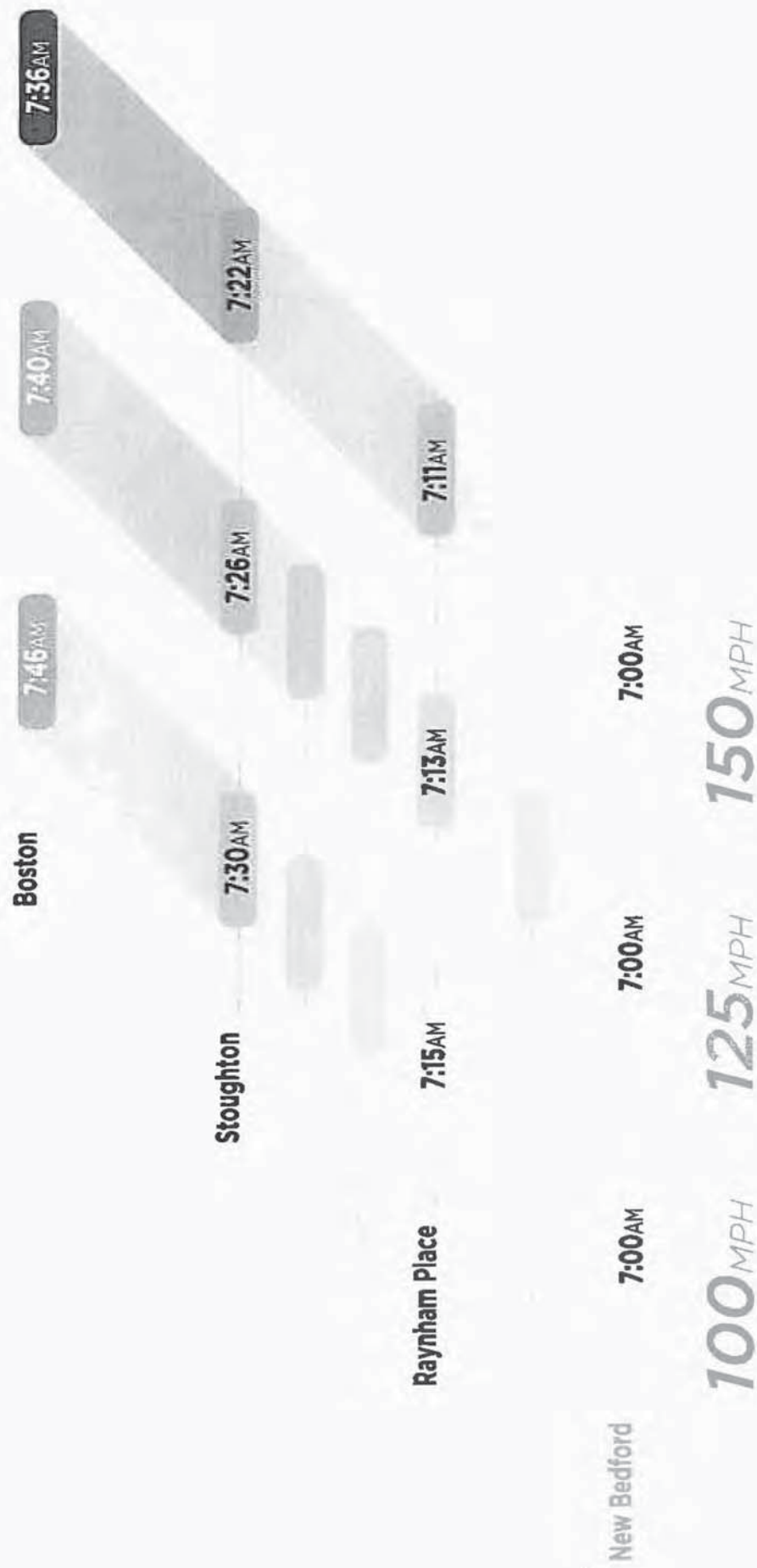
I am hopeful that the Final EIS/EIR will recognize that refinement of the Draft will advance its value.

Yours Sincerely

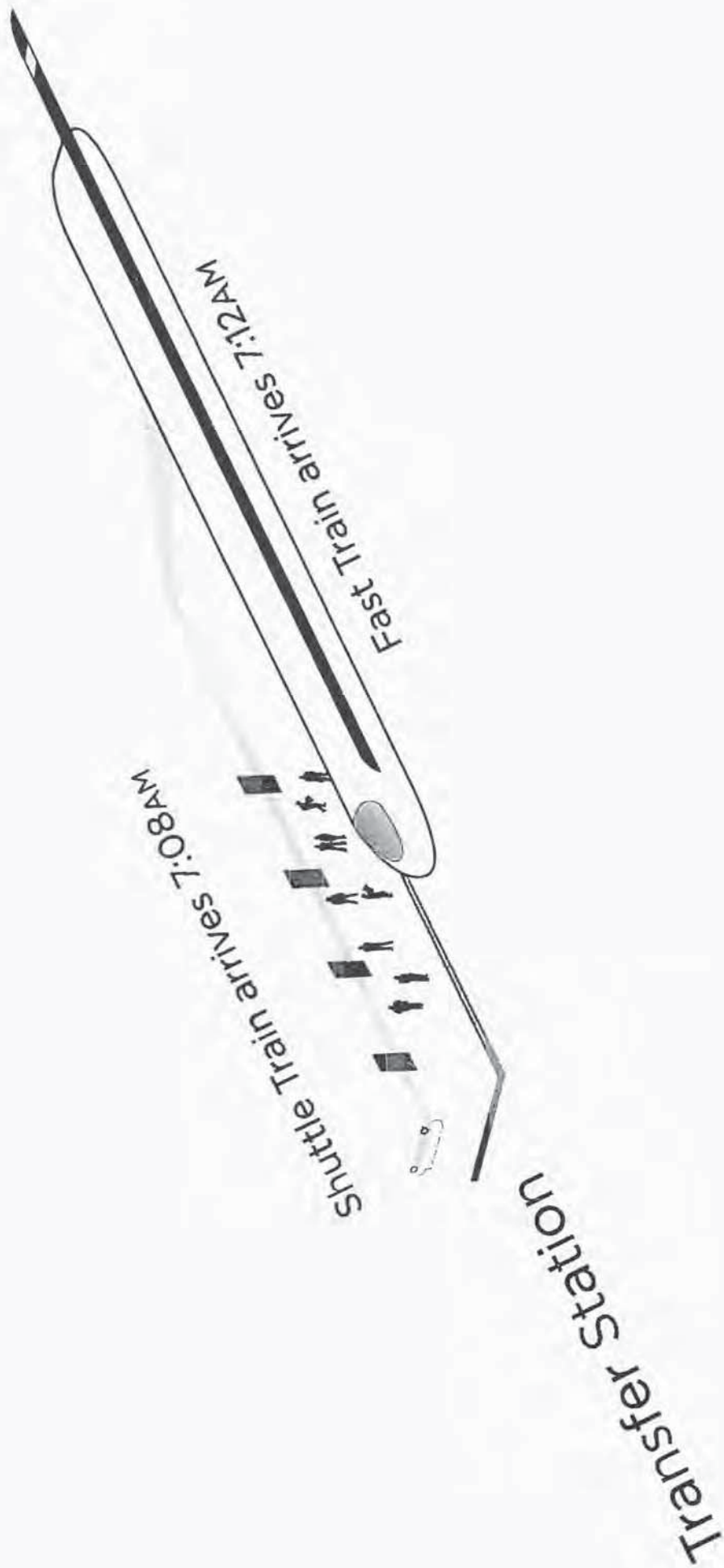


Michael J A Jolliffe

cc: Kristina Egan  
Nancy Durfee







# SOUTH COAST RAIL CORRIDOR

## COMMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Michael Jolliffe B.Sc(Eng.), A.C.G.I, D.I.C Imperial College, London

I am a Civil Engineer, living on the South Coast and familiar with the highway and traffic situation from the Coast up to Boston particularly on Rtes 140 and 24 as well as Interstate Highways 195, 495 and 93 and I have studied the potential impact of SCR for the last 3 years and have attended meetings, including the meeting on March 5,2011 in New Bedford.

I spoke within the 3 minutes that were allowed for each presentation. My comments were focused on the excessive time that the planned passenger train between New Bedford and Boston will consume in its passage. There is no reason why this journey should not occur in considerably less time than the projected 76 minutes for the electric powered locomotion on the Stoughton Corridor, which I and the majority of potential riders favor. It is evident from the analyses based on the choice of diesel or electric traction that the more rapid transport of the electric power will increase ridership despite its relatively slow pace compared to current Global expectations and adoption.

L-094.02

In accordance with the experience of my professional associates in Europe and other parts of the Globe, it is evident that one of the deficiencies in the current plans for operation of the Stoughton Line is the number of stations (10) on the passage from origin to destination. We know that each stop on a route, for a train that travels at 100 M.P.H, delays the transit for at least 4 or 5 minutes. This occurs because the train has to slow, drop off and pick up passengers and then accelerate to its permitted speed. The delay of the train is likely to be nine times five minutes or up to 45 minutes for those travelling from one end of the track to the other.

There is a way to provide much faster transport that reduces every passenger's travel time. By providing only two primary stops and by



NON-STOP  
STATION

TRANSFER  
STATION

NON-STOP  
STATIONS

TRANSFER  
STATION

6.55

7.10

6.55

7.11

7.26

7.14/7.16

7.30/7.32

7.12/7.14

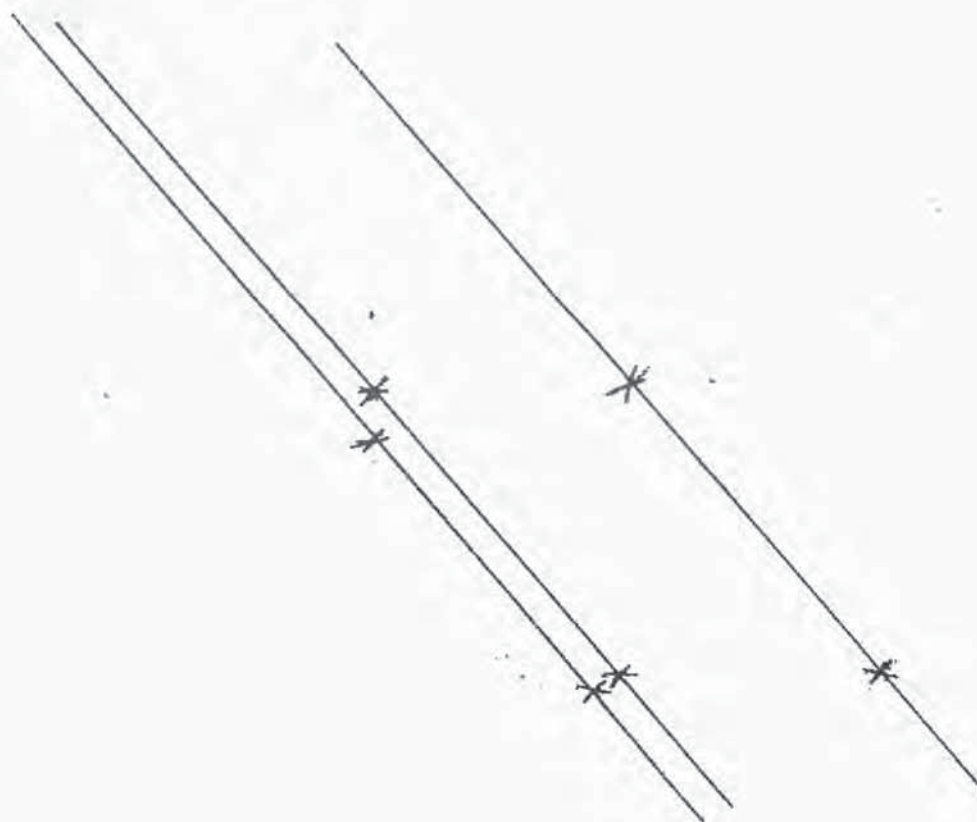
7.26/7.28

7.12/7.12

7.22/7.24

NO AM TRAIN CAN RETURN TO NEW BEDFORD TO BE 9:40 TRAIN WITHOUT IN-  
ITH. FALL RIVER OR SOUTH BEND NEW BEDFORD TRAIN.  
THIS COULD SAVE TWO TRAINSETS  
RANGE OF STATION TO SOUTH STATION @ 100 MPH MAX. 50 MINUTES - RAN  
NING WILL CONSIDERABLY INCREASE ATTRACTION.





**From:** Jane LeBlanc [janeleblanc@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 11:49 AM  
**To:** SC REIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Southcoast Rail Project  
 Alan Anacheke-Nasemann,]

## South Coast Rail project

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

**Cost** – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.

**Feasibility** – it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.

**Environment** – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

E-048.01

**Well Water Impact** – The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.

**Seven traffic crossings** – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.

**Historical areas and building compromised** – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.

**Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access** to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.

The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.

Jane LeBlanc  
 South Easton, MA

**From:** Michael LeBlanc [michaelleblanc@verizon.net]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 11:52 AM

**To:** SCREIS, NAE

**Subject:** Southcoast rail project

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann,

South Coast Rail project

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.

Feasibility – it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.

Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

E-051.01

Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.

Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.

Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.

Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.

The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.

Michael LeBlanc  
South Easton, MA



Heather and Doug Lewis  
97 Kennedy Circle  
South Easton, MA 02375

May 27, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District, Regulatory  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
Fax: 978-318-8303  
Email: [SCREIS@usace.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@usace.army.mil)

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann,

We write this letter in regards to our review of the DEIS/DEIR for the South Coast Rail Project. **First and foremost, we request that a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR be required prior to the release of the FEIR. After our review of the DEIS/DEIR we still have many questions and feel additional data and corrected data is necessary for the public's review prior to the FEIR.** Our concerns and questions fall into two main categories; whole project and neighborhood/town specific.

L-072.01

Many of our concerns are related to the project as a whole. We have highlighted those specific concerns below and ask that the Army Corps review them carefully.

**As stated in our comment letter after the ENF, we continue to have the same concerns about project purpose, cost vs. benefit and return on investment of the project. We ask that the following questions be answered in this regard.**

- There is a major difference between the Army Corps' project purpose and MassDOT's project purpose. MassDot is including smart growth in their project purpose and the Army Corps is not. This is a difference which will sway the cost vs. benefit, so we ask that the Army Corps continue to leave the smart growth component out of the equation. Also, we believe the state should be required for public review to include the "costs" of the smart growth component for their data and outline who will be responsible for those costs.
- One major goal of both the Army Corps and MassDOT is to "support economic development" in the cities of New Bedford and Fall River. We ask the Army Corps to require evidence that proves the economies of Lowell and Worcester improved once rail was provided to those communities. We believe this information will highlight the ability or inability of the rail to provide this "economic development."

L-072.02

L-072.03

- We believe MassDOT continues to grossly underestimate the cost of the South Coast Rail project and ask that the #s be revisited and revised to be accurate and up-to-date. The cost estimate of 1.4 billion for the Stoughton Alternative has been the number for numerous years. Homes and neighborhoods along the Stoughton Alternative were missed in earlier reports when this 1.4 billion amount was determined. The addition of these homes and neighborhoods will directly impact the costs. Inflation and fuel prices have skyrocketed since then and these increases need to be taken into account, #s adjusted and reported correctly up-to-date in the upcoming documents. L-072.04
- In addition, we believe the ridership numbers continue to be skewed. It appears from the documents that current MBTA riders who will CHANGE their train station once the new stations are open are being counted as NEW riders, when in fact they are not new riders. We would ask that the ridership #s be closely examined and only true NEW riders are included in the estimate, with a separate category for riders changing stations. Not only do we believe the ridership numbers to be skewed, we believe they are overinflated. As a point of reference, the state originally estimated the Greenbush line to be 4,200 riders. In a recently published article from the Boston Globe, the ridership after three years is averaging 2,100 riders or 50% projection; and the numbers are declining. We have every reason to believe the state is overinflating the ridership numbers on the Stoughton Alternative, as well. L-072.05
- Lastly, we would ask that a more specific funding plan be in place prior to the publication of the next document. It seems irresponsible to proceed so far down the path of this project without a specific funding plan, one which apparently will rely heavily on being subsidized by taxpayers. L-072.06

**Our next area of whole project concern revolves around environmental issues:**

- In order to complete this project a special permit will be required. This permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, would allow the state to “discharge fill materials into waters of the United States, including adjacent wetlands.” It is our understanding that what the state wants to do in order to complete this project is not allowable by law therefore this special permit is required. It seems that a law is in place to protect our waters, why would we break the law? L-072.07
- We question how the Army Corps can consider allowing the Hockomock Swamp, an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, to be bisected by a train? We ask the Army Corps to provide specific justification as to how this project is permissible. L-072.08
- In addition, we would ask that further review be given to protecting the safety of town’s drinking water supplies along the Stoughton Alternative. Portions of Raynham and Bridgewater’s drinking water are from the Hockomock Swamp. As well, the train will run within 400’ of Easton’s most productive drinking well. L-072.09

We are concerned about direct and indirect impacts to drinking water supplies both during construction and operation.

**Our next group of questions is more town and neighborhood specific; Easton and the neighborhood on Kennedy Circle in Easton. We can deduce that residents in other neighborhoods and towns would have the same questions and concerns; so while the questions may seem about a small population we know they apply to a much larger population of impacted homes and residents along the various alternatives.**

- We would like further review to be given to safety both during construction and operation to families who live directly beside the rail line. First, we found it challenging to locate safety information in the DEIS/DEIR and second, we are not satisfied with some of the answers we struggled to find. It came to our attention that during construction and once the train is up and operational there is no commitment made in the DEIS/DEIR to provide fencing between properties beside the railbed and the train. We do not understand this complete disregard and lack of commitment for safety and ask the Corps to consider this and consider the need for mitigation for this added safety. L-072.10
- We have been unable to determine how fast the train will travel behind Kennedy Circle and would like the Corps to require MassDot to provide an answer. Specifically what is the speed while traveling south and then north, as well? The speed of the train directly relates to the noise and vibration impacts to homes and without this clear data we cannot be sure the state is correctly showing which homes along Kennedy Circle will be impacted, to what degree homes will be impacted and what types of mitigation would be expected. L-072.11
- We ask for further review about vibration impacts to homes along the railbed in Easton. From the Volume II figures almost no homes are listed as impacted by vibration, homes within feet of the railbed! How can this be?
- We would like further clarification on the MBTA's Right of Way. Specifically, we would like to have the accurate widths of the Right of Way listed. We learned that the width ranges from 40' – 80', with the majority being 60'. We would like further review of the exact widths and further data reported in the upcoming documents. As well, we would like further information provided on the locations of the "staging areas" for equipment and materials used during the construction process. L-072.12
- We would like further review and disclosure on the water flow that can be found at different times of the year on the stretch of abandoned railbed between Purchase Street and Prospect Street in Easton. We learned that when the original freight trains ran along this abandoned railbed, the train tracks were elevated in the center with a ditch on either side to collect the run off and then the water would travel to the nearest wetlands or body of water. We understand that L-072.13



<p>MassDOT believes that over time those ditches have filled in and therefore water is flowing over where the tracks were originally and not in the ditches. The plan is when the ditches are rebuilt that they will once again function as years ago. We would submit to you, as we have in the past, that yes, substantial water flow (measuring up to 10” deep and moving steadily south) along where the old tracks were originally exists today. However, the difference we see on the Right of Way is that the ditches may have filled in slightly, but there are still deep ditches and when the water is flowing over the old area of tracks the ditches are filled with standing water. We would ask the Corps to continue to review this concern since what we see on the Right of Way is different than what MassDOT believes is occurring. Specifically, our concerns are what will happen to this water flow along the abandoned tracks and this sitting water in the ditches during construction and operation.</p>	<p>L-072.13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would like further review and clarification on certain figures in Volume II. We will use the figures 4.6-7b through 4.6-7d as examples. The yellow line showing Electric Severe Impact and Electric Impact change in width throughout these figures and we would request an answer as to why the width changes? What factors create the differences?</li> </ul>	<p>L-072.14</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would also like additional review and clarification about double tracking between the station in North Easton and Taunton. At a public meeting with MassDOT we were told double tracking would end just south of that North Easton Station. In the DEIS/DEIR (4.4-40) it states “New FRA Class 5 single or double track would be placed on the out-of-service railbed from the Stoughton Station to Winter Street in Taunton.”. We would like further review of this and clarification of exact locations of any areas for doubling tracking in this stretch.</li> </ul>	<p>L-072.15</p>
<p>We have worked diligently to be informed citizens and participate in the public review process. We have listed above many specific concerns in regards to our own neighborhood and town. We have also outlined our overriding project concerns. We would like the Army Corps to address both categories of our concerns. <b>We will reiterate our concern about the entire premise of this project and the exorbitant cost for the return on investment. We do not believe the Army Corps is justified in permitting this project via the Stoughton alternative under the Clean Water Act. If a transportation system is to be considered we continue to believe that the Rapid Bus Alternative should be determined to be the LEDPA.</b></p>	<p>L-072.16</p>
<p><b>In addition, we ask that a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR be published prior to the FEIR.</b></p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>	

Heather and Doug Lewis

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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:08 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: extension for South Coast Rail Review (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** Lewis [mailto:dhlew@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 01, 2011 3:55 PM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Subject:** extension for South Coast Rail Review

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

We write this email asking for an extension to the current review period for the DEIS on the South Coast Rail. We are residents of Easton and do not believe a total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is enough time to read through and examine closely the over 2,500 pages of material. We intend to submit our comments and ask for additional time. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days.

E-014.01

Thank you for taking the time to read our email and consider our request.

Sincerely,

Heather and Doug Lewis

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

May 23, 2011

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Senior Project Manager  
Regulatory Division, Permits and Enforcement Branch  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
Phone: 978-318-8214  
Fax 978-318-8303  
[SCEIS@usace.army.mil](mailto:SCEIS@usace.army.mil)

**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)**

Attn: MEPA Office  
Aisling O'Shea, EEA No. 14346  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900 (9th Floor)  
Boston, MA 02114  
Phone: 617-626-1024  
Fax: 617-626-1181  
[aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

First and foremost I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to comment on the South Coast Rail Project Draft EIS/EIR. And as a native of Taunton and a Transportation Engineering Consultant for the past forty years I believe that this project offers tremendous opportunity for the economic revitalization of the cities of Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford as well as establishing a model for "Smart Growth" throughout the south coast region. L-036.01

With respect to the alternatives analysis presented in the draft EIS/EIR, it is quite evident to me that the extension of the line through Stoughton is the most appropriate alternative and offers the greatest potential for Smart Growth along its corridor and therefore I support the implementation of extending the Stoughton line subject to further refinement of it's physical, socio-economic and environmental impacts in the design phase. L-036.02

As a Stoughton resident, my major concerns are the station design as presented on Figure 3.2-40. and the potential impact that electrification of the line will impose on community aesthetics and public safety.

With respect to the station design, it is obvious that it is a minimalist approach that offers no improvement over the present station. Parking is scattered about in five (5) separate surface lots owned by the T with more than 70% of the spaces extending 125 feet to 980 feet from the northerly end of the proposed platform. Clearly, the occupation of several acres of prime downtown Stoughton real estate by five separate surface lots with up to 50% of the spaces being a much further walk than desirable is not a formula that will promote Smart Growth. L-036.03



It would also appear that, when a train is stopped in the station, the Wyman Street crossing gates would be down, thereby perpetuating a major source of traffic congestion in downtown Stoughton during commuting hours. Further, there are no apparent accessibility accommodations for the Outbound line. In summary, the Stoughton Station design as presented fails to address several previous comments offered by Stoughton residents to the project designers at public meetings and offers no apparent impetus for Smart Growth.

L-036.03

As for electrification of the line, although enticing from a long term cost/environmental benefit, its negative impact on community aesthetics and public safety far outweigh those benefits. Obviously, major segments of the line traverse dense residential and commercial/retail centers through Canton, Stoughton, North Easton and on to the larger cities in the south coast. The erection of overhead stantions, electrical wires and safety fencing along the right of way will create a substantial negative aesthetic that will decrease adjacent property values and introduce an industrial presence throughout the entire corridor.

L-036.04

As for public safety, the MBTA's track record in maintaining its facilities, such as security fencing along its right of ways, is essentially non-existent and the location of the stantions along miles of residential neighborhoods and several schoolyards is a very tempting invitation for the young to climb and explore. It simply is not a prudent alternative to the use of diesel powered trains.

In closing, I would reiterate my support for the South Coast Rail Project's Stoughton Alternative and strongly suggest that 1) the design of the Stoughton Station needs to be re-visited with more community input and 2) that the electrification of the line be omitted from further consideration.

Very truly yours,



Forrest C. Lindwall  
175 Swanson Terrace  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
Cell: (617)-697-1142

**From:** Patti Linhares [linhairesp@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2011 5:42 PM  
**To:** SC REIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Railroad

To whom it may concern,

Where as I do see the need for the railroad to progress, I am very leery of the fact it will be  
 be coming through my back yard. The tracks are literally 10 feet from behind my garage.

I understand that concessions will be made like sound proof walls and or new windows  
 would be supplied for me to keep my house sound proof from all the noise and that's wonderful,  
 in the winter. But what happens in the summer when after a long day at work and my family and I  
 would like to relax on our deck .How do you cut that noise off??? How can we enjoy the outdoors


E-042.01

with trains going by all the time. I would be more that willing to sell my properties to the state.  
 Would that ever be an option? What kind of value will my property hold with a train constantly  
 going by. It's bad enough property values have plunged of late. What will this do. There has got  
 to be a way you can help us out here. Would you like to live like that? I truly doubt it!

E-042.02

Patti Linhares  
 96 Almy Street  
 Fall River, MA. 02720  
 linhairesp@comcast.net



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**From:** Leon Litchfield [Leon.Litchfield@umb.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 6:19 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Commuter Rail Extension Comments

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to extending the commuter rail to New Bedford/Fall River using the Stoughton alternative. I am opposed to this for the following reasons:

E-060.01

1. Safety - as a resident of Easton, I feel that the rail line will significantly impact the traffic flow in a section of town that is already very congested. Trains crossings at road level will snarl traffic and create traffic hazards.

E-060.02

2. Environmental - despite the finding that this alternative will cause the least harm environmentally, I feel that it will cause irreparable damage to the environment. This is especially true with respect to endangered (as well as other wildlife) in the Hockomock Swamp. I am also concerned that there will be negative effects on the water supply within the town of Easton, a town with water that has always been rated among the best in the Commonwealth.

E-060.03

3. Cost - if anything was learned from the Big Dig fiasco, it was that cost estimates escalate considerably. From the first time that this project was discussed, it has escalated a great deal. The current cost estimate that is rapidly approaching two billion dollars is not cost effective for the number of people that are estimated to use this commuter rail extension.

E-060.04

4. Anti-Family - Finally, and most importantly, it does not make sense to me that this amount of money would be used to transport individuals away from their families for several hours per day. When considering the time that would be needed to travel to and from commuter rail stations, take the train, and travel to a job location, it is not unreasonable to estimate that employees would spend two hours or more each way (or 4+ hours round-trip) to work in Boston.

E-060.05

While the funds (both state and federal) that are earmarked for this project are probably set aside for transportation purposes only, it would make a great deal more sense to use even half of what it will cost to extend this rail line as incentives and support for businesses in the New Bedford/Fall River area. If funding was used to encourage

businesses to develop and provide jobs in these towns, employees would be able to not only make a living but to spend time with their families and friends.

E-060.05

Thank you for your consideration of these comments!

Sincerely,

Leon Litchfield

30 Pond Street

N. Easton, MA 02356

e-mail: [leon.litchfield@umb.edu](mailto:leon.litchfield@umb.edu)

**From:** Antoinette Lopes [a\_lopes\_73@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 11:57 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Cc:** kristina .egan@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail (DEIS/DEIR) Comment

May 25, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
 Army Corps of Engineers  
 696 Virginia Road  
 Concord, MA 01742-2751  
 email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil  
 fax: 978.318.8303

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
 attn: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
 Boston, MA 02114  
 email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
 fax: 617.626.1181

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I am writing to you to provide my comments on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Let me first explain who I am a bit. I was born and grew up in New Bedford. In 1991, at seventeen years of age, I left to make my way in the world. But by 1999 I knew it wasn't panning out and that I would probably have to come home. When I called my mom and told her this, she told me that it would be okay because there was going to be a train going back and forth between here and Boston. Well, as it turns out, it was not okay.

I read the sections of the Environmental Impact Statement comparing the different options and the estimates of ridership. I think it's clear that there is only one sensible option which is the Stoughton Electric option. But in my opinion, and I'm just a person (I haven't done any studies), the ridership was lower than I expected. I understand that there are formulas that they use to come up with these numbers. I gather that they use the numbers of people who already commute to Boston on a daily basis. That makes sense. It's called Commuter Rail. But what I'd like to add to the argument is really not about commuters. It's about normal folks who rarely if ever go to Boston, who I believe would *if* there was a train available to them whatever it's called.

E-049.01

Let me tell you a story. About a year ago, I was sitting on a local city bus (I don't drive at all), and I overheard the bus driver say that she was going to take her daughter for tests in Boston. She was afraid because she would be taking the train from Lakeville and was worried about getting lost. Even though I live here and it shouldn't be a surprise to me, I was still shocked. Someone who has been working in public transport for well over a decade was afraid to take public transportation to Boston because it was that foreign to her. I don't know why she had to take the train that day, maybe her husband had the car or hers was in the shop, but it was clear that this was the very first time she would be taking the train.

I tell you this story because I think it provides a backdrop for why I think bringing the commuter rail to New Bedford will have an enormous impact on people who would never even think to contact you letting you know that they support the rail. They may not even think it's for them. Or they may have heard



before, as I did, that it was coming and believe that it's just a bunch of malarkey.

New Bedford is downtrodden. Her citizens do not know to fight for something like this and they probably think they don't deserve it anyway. They just put up with "how things are". It's easier to not want things to get better. It's less risky. If you don't try, you can't fail. And it's better not to fail. They talk about the old days if they're old enough to remember when the city had more. If not, they just accept less as a fact of life. People here are very isolated. In that isolation their worldview becomes even more limited. They worry about today's problems, maybe the price of gas, what's happening with their family, the Red Sox if they have an extra minute. For the most part, their minds never leave their own backyard. They may be decent citizens of New Bedford, but it makes them horrible citizens of the world. They're not the green thinking recycling do-gooders you might hope. There is a small percentage of those people here but that's not who I'm talking about. I'm talking about the majority of residents. They don't care who is President because it doesn't matter anyway, so why vote? If we get wind power or keep enslaving ourselves to big oil, what difference does it make? There's nothing they can do about it. They're the little guy. Because of that lack of power, the future is bleak. At least they think so.

It's that attitude that makes New Bedford a lousy place to live. It can look really pretty, and often does, but the attitude is monochrome. I probably shouldn't be admitting that but it's true. When I was a kid, there was supposed to be nothing here and now there is even less. I know that people within our local government have worked very hard to make something of the festival season that we have in the summer and the downtown historic area. They've done their best to make it a cool place for cool people, attempting to capitalize on the number of college students in the area. And there has been something of a resurgence of nightlife. So that's something.

But that has not spread up to where most of the population of New Bedford lives. Those people have little to do with Chowder Fest. Those people are the ones who drive to and from work everyday trying to eke out a living if they are lucky enough to have a job. Their cost of living continues to go up while their quality of life goes down. And they "can't do anything about it". In my opinion, it's the attitude more than the situation that keeps it that way. But the situation doesn't inspire anyone to change anything.

This leads me to the hidden benefit I believe the South Coast Rail could really bring to New Bedford. And that is the promise of a new day. Proof that it isn't true that they are powerless. The believe that there is a world out there and they are part of it. That there are still possibilities for everyone, young and old.

That requires movement. That requires cultural exchange. That requires going places and doing things that you haven't before. I believe a train is essential for this. We have buses. I take the Dattco bus up to Boston when I can. But I can't do it often. It's twenty four dollars round trip. After that I don't have a lot to spend so I just basically go to get out of here for the day. It's inconvenient. The schedule doesn't allow for any sort of night out in Boston. If concerts and shows start at eight o'clock, a last bus leaving promptly at nine does little for you. So you only have the possibility of a matinee. Limited again. As for those who have the ability to drive up, they don't, except for on the rare occasion. It's too much of a hassle and an expense (gas/parking). Boston might as well be outer space. And most of those people would cut off their right arm before they'd leave their beloved automobile in a park and ride to take a (\*gasp\*) bus!

I know. I know. This is commuter rail. The trains probably won't come back to New Bedford later than the buses do now or maybe not even that late and not on the weekend. I get it. But my hope and my belief is that the commuter service would be the beginning. The beginning of a door opening wide. Once the train is there, once people, more people than are estimated, take it on a regular basis, I believe it will show that people want to go back and forth between our two cities and eventually that will bring more service. And not only will it allow people to go to Boston when they like, without the burden of inflated gas prices or inflated bus fares based on gas prices, but it will also allow tourists from around the world the ability to come here. New Bedford is and always has been tourist ready. It's just a matter of getting them here. A direct connection to and from Boston will entice train-friendly Europeans and other world travelers to stop by and say 'Hi!'. The new beginning that the rail would provide would fertilize the work that has already been done to make the Whaling City a tourist friendly place. I can imagine New Bedford blooming into a kaleidoscope of colorful of people from everywhere walking along the working waterfront on any given afternoon. Maybe there'll be someone in a Manchester United jersey asking a Toronto Maple Leafs fan which way it is back to the station after an afternoon stop off during their week

E-049.02

in New England. Perhaps they'll decide to walk back together and pass a Scandinavian baby who lets go of his balloons when a seagull steals his fries. This is the kind of scenario I can imagine when I think of the future of a New Bedford with commuter rail. It's a bright happy future full of people coming together in a way that they don't do now that will put New Bedford back on the map.

Is that future possible without the commuter rail? I actually don't think so. I think it's necessary. I think New Bedford needs it to connect back to the rest of the world again. The people of New Bedford need it whether they know it or not. And who knows maybe someday the world will need us too. Whatever negative impact bringing the rail here might have will already be made up for by an electric train. The oil issue will be obliterated by an electric train. People not using up what's left driving back and forth contaminating the air and not spending money on it will be able to put that money back into the economy in other ways. Maybe they'll buy an electric car. Maybe they'll put solar panels on their house. Maybe they'll do both. If the electric train creates some unforeseen environmental issue perhaps it will be one of those future forward thinking New Bedford natives, enriched and molded by years of cultural exchange, who will be the one to solve it.

Thank you for your time,

Antoinette Lopes  
190 North Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740





**From:** John Malley [john@hrhatch.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 26, 2011 12:14 PM

**To:** Stoughton CREIS, NAE

**Cc:** brian.a.joyce@masenate.gov ; louis.kafka@mahouse.gov; william.galvin@mahouse.gov

**Subject:** South Coast Rail

Hi, my name is John Malley and I am a resident of Stoughton, MA, and I do not live near the railroad tracks. However, I want to express my opposition to the proposal for an increase in rail service through Stoughton, to New Bedford.

E-054.01

First, the increase in rail traffic would be a serious detriment to the town, which is essentially split in half by the rail line. The line would need to be double tracked along the entire route through the town and there would be high-speed trains on the tracks. The line runs near the O'Donnell Middle School and is along the walking route for students going to the middle and high schools. The increased traffic and speed along the line will create a hazard to the children going to and from the schools.

E-054.02

Second, with the addition of the second track and given the fact the rail will end at a port, the line will also become a significant freight line, hauling stuff from New Bedford all the way through to Readville.

E-054.03

Stoughton and towns along the South Coast Route would see 24/7 train traffic (not just commuter rail service) along a densely populated route, where houses and businesses are located near, and in some cases on the old rail bed.

I believe the State has significantly over-estimate the potential use of the commuter line and underplayed what is going to be a more significant impact, which is the addition of a significant amount of freight traffic from the New Bedford port.

Please rethink this plan and at the absolute least, provide mitigation in the form of underground tracks from Central Street in Stoughton through to at least the Stoughton/Easton line.

E-054.04

Sincerely,

John Malley  
21 Stoughton St  
Stoughton, MA  
781-344-2951

May 27, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
896 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Sec. Richard K. Sullivan  
Exec. Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA, Aisling O'Shea  
Suite 900  
100 Cambridge Street  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: South Coast Rail  
DIER/DEIC Comment Letter  
Opposed to the Stoughton Alternative

Dear Sirs,

I am writing as a concerned citizen and as a resident of Stoughton, MA. I attended the meeting held recently in Mansfield, MA regarding the proposed project. I am concerned and have been since the outset regarding the cost and efficacy of the project – The Stoughton Alternative. L-073.01

For nearly a decade I worked in southeastern MA. For two years prior, I worked for a Boston based hospital which opened a satellite facility in southeastern MA with the hope of generating referrals for diagnostic and treatment procedures at its larger facility in Boston. The intended outcome for that speculated investment, opening the satellite office, never materialized.

What I learned while working for the Boston based hospital and later as the agency head of an agency located and providing services to communities in southeastern MA was that the folks living in the southeastern MA area do not "think" Boston for employment, medical, recreational, sports or entertainment needs. They "think" Providence because it is closer. That has not changed and extending the railroad to that area is a very expensive, nearly two billion dollar effort, will not change the culture of thinking anytime soon. L-073.02

I seriously challenge the validity of the ridership projections for the project. Moreover, particularly at this time when every dollar spent needs to be carefully evaluated so as to have the greatest impact on the economy, the cost of the project could be more prudently spent in Fall River and New Bedford to improve the economy by bringing jobs to the area and by improving the area's regional transportation infrastructure. L-073.03

There is already existing bus service from Fall River and New Bedford to Boston. If the current demand for more of the existing transportation service were evident by a steadily increasing ridership that would suggest evidence for a greater consideration in revisiting the transportation needs of Fall River and New Bedford. But that is not the case.

MAY31'11 REG DIV

Please carefully evaluate the impact of this initiative as it moves forward both on the apparent environmental impact and the claimed need for the project.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Malloy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'M'.

John Malloy  
1821 Washington Street  
P.O. Box 312  
Stoughton, MA 02072-0312



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**From:** Trent Maltby [tmaltby711@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011 4:23 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** Opposition to South Coast Rail

To Whom It May Concern:

I wanted to write to you to let you know of my opposition to the South Coast Rail Project. I live in Easton and know that this debacle will have a truly detrimental effect on our town and the other towns along the route. However, my main objection comes as a Massachusetts tax payer. Regardless of which route is chosen, this project makes absolutely no financial sense and this is going to be the South Coast's "Big Dig." Based upon the current estimate of \$2 billion (which will obviously grow), I cannot understand how this is still being considered given the miniscule number of passengers who will take the trip from New Bedford all the way to Boston. The special interests and politicians in New Bedford/Fall River seem to have done an exceptional job lobbying because no one seems to be looking at the basic facts. It's too expensive and we simply don't have the funds given the current economy. The MBTA is currently running in a deficit. Please tell me how it will be able to build this line and also maintain it's current lines, when it's unable to do so now. This seems to be Beacon Hill politics at it's worst and I hope that, somehow, this disaster never comes to fruition.

E-050.01

Sincerely,

Trent Maltby

21 Kennedy Cir

Easton, MA 02375

Fax to:

617-626-1181

978-318-8303

I'm trying to submit comments regarding the South Coast Rail Project but I am unable to email the contact person indicated on the website. F-003.01

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Attn: MEPA Office [Aisling O'Shea], EEA No. 14346

100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

Boston, MA 02114

Email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

RE: SOUTH COAST RAIL PROJECT

Can you email me at [smartin@fitcorp.com](mailto:smartin@fitcorp.com) with the correct email address?

I am a resident of Easton and would like to submit comments. Thank you.

Eileen J. Marum  
SouthCoast Rail Project

Eileen J. Marum, MPP  
1 Acushnet Road Apt 28  
Mattapoisett, MA 02739  
508-758-9751  
u\_emarum@umassd.edu

May 24, 2011

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
Attn: Alan Anacheke-Nasemann

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

Thank you for coming to the Keith Middle School Auditorium at 225 Hathaway Boulevard in New Bedford, MA on Thursday, May 5, 2011 to solicit comments related to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation SouthCoast Rail Project. I support enthusiastically an electric railroad travelling through the Stoughton route and the Hockomock Swamp.

L-043.01

## **Introduction**

The Hockomock Swamp, contained within parts of Bridgewater, Easton, Norton, Raynham, Taunton, and West Bridgewater, is not as pristine an area as some opponents of the train might have you believe. Although the swamp acts as a natural flood control mechanism for much of the northern part of southeastern Massachusetts, it is crossed by a number of roads—including heavily travelled Route 24 and Route 138—as well as an old railroad bed. Dirt bikes also frequently use trails within the swamp.

The proximity of Routes 24 and 138 and Interstate 495 to the Hockomock swamp and their associated wetlands and water bodies is a direct and imminent threat to these resources and their environmental values. Toxic runoff from these roadways [gasoline, oil, and antifreeze, brake fluid, salt and sand] percolate through the soil and find their way into groundwater and household wells threatening the quality and overall viability of these water resources. I agree that maintaining high water quality is important not only to preserving the surface and groundwater system as a source of public drinking water, but also for sustaining the interdependence of vegetation, wildlife and water resources. For these reasons, road traffic on Route 24 and 138 and Interstate 495 should be reduced and train service established.

MAY25 11 REC DIV



Regional growth trends indicate that residential, commercial and industrial development will continue, and will be located in proximity to major transportation routes. Rail service would mitigate the detrimental effect from the incessant highway noise on those people who live in close proximity to the major highways--route 24, 138 and Interstate 495. Rail service would decrease the number of motorcycle crashes, auto crashes, truck crashes, and wildlife crashes, and save lives, property, and the cost of insurance. Southeastern Massachusetts needs an intelligent transportation system that incorporates a quick efficient rail system.

L-043.01

### **Expansion of transportation capacity in the South Coast region is limited**

Expansion of transportation capacity in the South Coast region with the existing transit services (bus, taxis, park-and-ride and vanpool) is limited as they use the same roadway system and are thus subject to the same roadway congestion. Transportation system solutions based on highway improvements are limited due to policy considerations and constraints imposed by the physical conditions of the SouthCoast area, where such highway improvements would need to be implemented to be effective in addressing capacity and congestion issues. However, while highway expansion and utilization of existing transportation services do not provide long-term solutions to the transportation problems, public transit connections--in terms of travel time, service frequency, capacity and geographic availability--does provide opportunities to improve transportation between New Bedford/Fall River and Boston and between the South Coast cities of New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton.

L-043.02

### **Southeast Expressway congested**

Both Route 128 and the Southeast Expressway are heavily congested roadways, particularly during peak periods. Traffic volumes on Route 128 are approximately 135,000 vehicles per day north of Route 24 (towards I-95) and 167,000 vehicles per day to the south (towards I-93/Route 3). Traffic volumes on I-93/Route 3 are as high as approximately 191,000 vehicles per day. On Route 24, the major north south corridor in the South Coast region, the average daily traffic ranges from 26,700 vehicles per day in Fall River to over 115,000 vehicles per day in Randolph. Traffic congestion and long delays are common on the northern segments of this highway during weekday peak commuting periods.

L-043.03

As the population in the South Coast region and employment in the Boston area have grown, the demands on the roadway system linking Southeastern Massachusetts to the rest of the region have increased. Traffic volumes on the limited-access state routes linking the South Coast region to the employment centers of Boston have been growing over the past decade.

### **Traffic Volumes Grow Rapidly in some Areas.**

Generally, traffic volumes on the roadways in the SouthCoast region have grown at an annual rate of two to three percent over the past decade. The largest increases in traffic volumes have been on Route 24 in Raynham and Taunton, where traffic volumes increased 4.1 percent in Raynham and 5.0 percent in Taunton. Traffic volumes on Route 140 in Taunton increased at an annual rate of 2.2 percent. Route 128 and I-93, the Southeast Expressway, exhibited fairly stable traffic volumes, considering they are some of the most congested highways in the state and traffic volumes on these roadways are at or near capacity for long portions of the day. Moreover, these roadways have limited capacity for further increases in average daily traffic volumes leading to further congestion with continued population growth.

The increases in traffic volumes on the principal highways linking the SouthCoast region to downtown Boston have led to a deteriorating level of service on these roadways, especially during peak periods. Delays on these roadways are now common and have become worse over the past decade, particularly, on Route 24 as it approaches Route 128/I-93 in Randolph.

Increases to peak-hour volumes of up to 3,500 and 4,000 vehicles per hour on Route 24 and on I-93/Route 128 in Braintree and in Randolph, respectively, have led to deterioration of Level of Service on these major roadways, which are intended to relieve the local roadways from regional traffic. Several mitigation measures have been implemented on I-93 to reduce congestion (high-occupancy vehicle lanes, improved MBTA Red Line service, and Old Colony Commuter Rail service). However, this highway continues to operate at poor levels of service, resulting in substantial congestion and decreased safety. There are no roadway alternatives to the use of Route 24 and I-93, and to my knowledge no mitigation measures are planned to reduce congestion.

The lack of adequate capacity of the roadway system and the resultant reduction in level of service is anticipated to become even more problematic with the increased demand for transportation resulting from the growth of the SouthCoast region as commuters living near Boston are moving away to areas further from the metropolitan core. Southeastern Massachusetts has been one of the fastest growing areas in the Commonwealth. Between 1960 and 2000, this area experienced a growth rate of 31 percent. Between 1960 and 1990, this area had an annual growth of over 2,500 people per year from a base population of 343,353 to its 1990 population of 430,846. Growth slowed somewhat between 1990 and 2000, to an annual growth of approximately 1,950 people per year. These figures translate to a growth of 4.5 percent between 1990 and 2000. For every 10,000 new residents moving into the area, it is expected 3,500 new residential units will be needed. This influx is predicted to generate 27,650 new vehicle trips per day. This will further degrade the level of service provided by the regional transportation system

L-043.04

connecting the SouthCoast region to Boston resulting in a concomitant increase in congestion, accidents, travel time and air pollution; not only on the highways themselves but potentially also on nearby local roadways that may absorb the traffic spillover from nearby congested highways.

L-043.04

### **Motor vehicles predominant sources of ozone precursor emissions**

Motor vehicles are the predominant sources of ozone precursor emissions within the SouthCoast region, which has been classified as a Severe Non-Attainment Area for ozone. In other words, the region does not meet one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for the ozone, one of the criteria pollutants designated in the Clean Air Act. Automobiles also emit carbon monoxide through the partial combustion of carbon-containing compounds in gasoline. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles and fuels should be a priority for the Commonwealth. These emissions can be reduced through several initiatives: (1) promote public transit, (2) multi-modal systems and (3) transit-oriented development [smart growth].

L-043.05

### **Air Quality**

The highways serving the SouthCoast region convey high volumes of automobile traffic, and have high levels of congestion both of which increases vehicle emissions. Transportation alternatives for SouthCoast commuters that would reduce the mobile-source emissions of greenhouse gases are limited due to the inadequacy of the transit system. A shift in travel from automobiles to public transit could reduce vehicle emissions and improve regional air quality.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) measures the extent of motor vehicle operation or the total number of vehicle miles travelled within an area on a given day. It is an important gauge for air quality and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, as emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases are related to the distance traveled by automobiles (and to a lesser degree congestion). Regions with high VMTs per capita have a greater potential for poor air quality and GHG emissions compared to regions with lower VMT per capita. One of the reasons for the relatively high VMT in the SouthCoast region is the much greater proportion of transportation by car versus rail or bus, as compared to other regions.

### **Demand for Transportation Services**

Southeastern Massachusetts experienced a 4.5 percent population growth between 1990 and 2000. As the affordable housing market has moved further from the Boston metropolitan area,

L-043.06



SouthCoast has become one of the fastest growing areas in the Commonwealth. Many people relocating to the area are retaining their jobs in the Boston market and thus increase the demand for transportation services between the area and Boston as well as within the South Coast region. The number of commuter trips between the SouthCoast region and Boston was 8,000 in 2000 and is expected to increase by 1,200 to 9,200 in 2030. Most of the commuter trips from the region to the Boston market are in single occupant vehicles and public transit accounts for a minor proportion of work trips in the service area. This trend will continue in absence of improved public transit connections between Boston and the SouthCoast region.

L-043.06

### **Inadequate Transit Services**

The inadequacy of public transit service in the SouthCoast region is reflected in several aspects: The availability of public transit service in absolute terms and compared to other regions, especially those that have a large commutation segment to downtown Boston, and the quality of transit service as expressed in travel time and frequency of service, especially during the peak hours. The geographic availability of transit service to people in the region is also relevant in terms of access to employment opportunities and services, including education and healthcare. In addition to transit services between the SouthCoast region and Boston, transit services within the SouthCoast region are also relevant. An indicator of quality of transit service is the MBTA's Service Delivery Policy. This policy identifies minimum frequency of service levels that provides the guidelines by which the MBTA maintains accessibility to the transportation network within a reasonable waiting period. For Commuter Rail and Commuter Bus minimum frequencies should provide three trips in a peak direction during the morning and afternoon to evening peak periods.

L-043.07

Existing transportation in the SouthCoast region is predominantly auto-oriented and transit services within the SouthCoast region are limited to bus and demand-response services operated by regional transit authorities and private carriers. Most of the commuter trips from the SouthCoast region to the Boston market are in single occupant vehicles and public transit accounts for a minor proportion of work trips in the service area. To a large extent, this can be attributed to the lack of public transit alternatives other than privately-operated bus service. Many communities in the SouthCoast region lack public transit facilities other than private bus services and major population centers are as much as 25 miles from existing commuter rail stations. All commuter rail stations are located outside the SouthCoast region and are already nearing capacity. Present modes of transportation include:

### **1. Bus Service**

Bus service to Boston from the SouthCoast region including the cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford is limited to private carriers. Private carriers also connect Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton with each other and with Providence, Newport, and points beyond. Bus service from the South Coast region to Boston uses the regional roadway system and is thus subject to the same congestion and safety problems on the highway system as other vehicles, resulting in long and unpredictable travel times. The bus service is also substantially more expensive than MBTA commuter rail services over similar distances, creating an additional constraint on usage of bus service, especially for lower income travelers. Some bus service exists to commuter rail stations outside the South Coast Area; however the transfer between two transit services increases overall travel time, rendering it less attractive. The private express bus service is subject to the same congestion. While the current bus service plays an important role, especially as it is the only regular transit service between the SouthCoast region and Boston, its use is limited, reflecting constraints related to travel time, service frequency and cost.

L-043.07

### **2. Vanpools/Carpools**

Vanpools in communities of the SouthCoast region are provided through MassRides. Although relevant as a complementary service vanpool and carpool travel times are severely impacted by slow travel speeds on the expressway and secondary roads.

### **3. Park-and-Ride**

Park-and-ride facilities and carpool/vanpool services are offered along the primary regional travel corridors in the SouthCoast region. Park-and Ride lots are associated with car-pooling, van-pooling or private bus service to Boston. There are nine public park-and-ride lots located in the SouthCoast region, of which five are located along the primary roadways from the region to the Boston metropolitan area and four not in the immediate vicinity of the primary access routes to Boston. In addition, three private park-and-ride lots in the South Coast region are available exclusively for customers using the private bus services to Boston.

#### 4. Commuter Rail

No commuter rail service is offered within the SouthCoast region. The nearest commuter lines (MBTA's Providence Line and Middleborough Lines) terminate northwest and northeast of the South Coast region. More importantly, the three major cities in the South Coast region; Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford are the only cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by passenger rail. The closest commuter rail stations to the SouthCoast region are Middleborough/Lakeville (MBTA Middleborough Line), and Attleboro Station and Providence Station (MBTA Providence Line). The Middleborough Line serves areas east of the South Coast region and southeast of Boston, with stations in Lakeville and Bridgewater, while the Attleboro/Providence and Stoughton lines serve communities to the north and west of the SouthCoast region. The Attleboro and Mansfield stations are the primary access points on the Attleboro/Providence Line. The Stoughton Station serves as the primary access point on the Stoughton Line. All communities in the heart of the SouthCoast region are outside a six-mile access radius of these stations, and some – including the major population centers such as New Bedford and Fall River (combined population approximately 182,000) - are more than 20 miles and up to 25 miles from the nearest train station. Due to their distance to the nearest commuter rail station the existing commuter rail lines to Boston are difficult for residents to access. Please see chart below.

L-043.07

Community	Closest Station	Proximity <sup>1</sup> (miles)
Acushnet	Middleborough/Lakeville	15.7
Berkley	Middleborough/Lakeville	10.7
Dartmouth	Middleborough/Lakeville	20.9
Dighton	Middleborough/Lakeville	13.7
Easton	Stoughton	5.1
Fairhaven	Middleborough/Lakeville	22.5
Fall River	Middleborough/Lakeville	19.6
Freetown	Middleborough/Lakeville	10.8
Lakeville	Middleborough/Lakeville	3.3
Mattapoisett	Middleborough/Lakeville	19.4
New Bedford	Middleborough/Lakeville	20.8
Norton	Mansfield	5.7
Raynham	Bridgewater	7.5
Rehoboth	Attleboro	8.8



Rochester	Middleborough/Lakeville	13.7
Somerset	Providence	19.4
Swansea	Providence	15.5
Taunton	Middleborough/Lakeville	9.7
Westport	Middleborough/Lakeville	28.3

Travel to these stations is also limited to local secondary roads, which further increases travel time. Moreover, for those commuters in the SouthCoast region who live closer to commuter rail stations outside the SouthCoast region, constraints to the usage of the existing stations are posed by station parking and system capacity issues. Commuter rail services are currently approaching capacity and system capacity is limited due to the lack of adequate parking at these stations. Commuter rail parking lots in Attleboro, Mansfield, Stoughton, and on the Middleborough Line are already heavily utilized.

L-043.07

## Conclusion

Poor or limited transportation opportunities limit access by SouthCoast residents to important Boston destinations, including education opportunities provided by numerous private and public colleges and universities, the highest concentration of medical facilities and specialties in the Commonwealth, cultural facilities, and sporting events. Existing highway congestion, extended travel times, and limited and often expensive parking affect the ability of many area residents to access these destinations.

The City of Boston continues to provide substantial employment opportunities at all levels, and also contains a substantial employment labor force. Many of the SouthCoast region communities, particularly in the towns of Easton, Raynham and Taunton, have a substantial work orientation to Boston. Access between SouthCoast communities and downtown Boston is constrained by the limited, overloaded highway system and the lack of alternative transit modes. The ability to park in Boston is constrained by the limited space available to provide parking, high demand for parking resulting from new development, the high cost of parking, and the metropolitan area parking freeze. Residents of SouthCoast communities would benefit substantially from improved employment access and reduced cost of commuting and parking.

Currently, commuter rail service does not extend into the SouthCoast region, making access to commuter rail difficult for area residents. Commuter rail service is critical to the vitality and viability of the SouthCoast region, the health of the Hockomock Swamp, and the water and air quality of all Commonwealth residents residing in proximity to Routes, 24, 138, 106 and 495. Rail service to the SouthCoast region would protect the Hockomock Swamp and its groundwater system and sustain the

interdependence of vegetation and wildlife by reducing motor vehicle traffic on major roadways traversing the Hockomock Swamp. It is imperative that we stop discharging contaminants directly or indirectly into this resource area.

Finally, the following summarizes the need for the project and aspects that relate to regional mobility and quality of service:

- Inadequate capacity of the existing transportation system to downtown Boston

- Congestion of the roadway system

- Lack of regional mobility

- Safety issues associated with the existing roadway system

- Air quality issues associated with the existing transportation system

- Demand for transportation services

- Inadequate public transit services

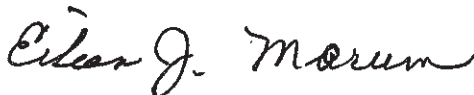
- Absence of other regional transportation improvements to address the identified transportation needs

- Smart Growth considerations

Please send me a copy of the final EIS/EIR

L-043.08

Thank you,



Eileen J. Marum

CC Kristina Egan

Nancy Durfee

**James H. Mathes**  
**303 Brownell Avenue**  
**New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740**

May 5, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2754

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.  
EOEEA  
MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street  
Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Kristina Egan  
MassDOT  
Ten Park Plaza  
Room 4150  
Boston, MA 02116

I offer my strongest possible support for the extension of commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River – specifically, for the South Coast Rail Project. Additionally, when you reach the appropriate point in the process, I urge you to select the so-called Stoughton Route, as it will provide the fastest commuter trip time, and is the most environmentally sound alternative. Further, I hope you will endorse the use of electric trains, as opposed to diesel-powered engines so as to maximize the potential of this new rail service.

E-021.01

Among my reasons for publicly commenting on this project is because I am a member of a community that is doing everything it can to pick itself up by its bootstraps and improve our lot in life, not only for ourselves, but also for future generations. We are doing everything we can with the resources available to us to make our part of Massachusetts a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

For too long now, the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts has been without the vital transportation services afforded by commuter rail service. This lack of service has adversely impacted our region's economy and quality of life. Ironically, the primary opponents of South Coast commuter rail are people living north of us who already have commuter rail service available to them. For decades now, they've mounted efforts to deny our region from having a primary transportation system they've been using and enjoying for years. We've listened to their complaints about not wanting South Coast Commuter Rail trains passing through their towns. Yet, scores of residents from the very towns who seek to block our efforts climb aboard commuter rail trains every day – trains that pass through other communities on their trips to and from Boston. To be blunt, it's annoying to be on the receiving end of their rather unsophisticated "do as I



say, not as I do” message. Personally, I don’t care what they say. But, I’m determined to be able to do the same things they’re able to do. Nothing more, and nothing less!

Transportations systems are primary assets that support a community’s economy. The cities of New Bedford and Fall River suffer some of the highest unemployment rates in Massachusetts. There are literally tens of thousands of people who are out of work in our region. These are good, hard-working people who want and deserve the same opportunities to access jobs that are currently available to our northern neighbors presently enjoying the benefit of commuter rail service.

E-021.02

The potential economic impact of opening access to employment opportunities for our unemployed and under-employed workers is staggering. Each commuter rail car offers the potential to ferry dozens of workers to good-paying jobs, and in return fetch millions of dollars in economic impact by way of the paychecks they bring back to their families and communities. You see, just as nations have measurable “trade balances,” so do regions. As such, the exchange of labor for paychecks made possible by commuter rail service will have a dramatic positive impact on our SouthCoast trade balance.

It’s been a long time since residents have had an opportunity to become involved in the effort to bring commuter rail to our region. That’s why there are so many of us here tonight. By every measure, commuter rail will be the same powerful economic tool for us as it is in every other eastern Massachusetts city and town that already has it. We want it, too. We need it. We deserve it.

If you want to do something that will help us help ourselves, move this project forward to completion. Do everything you can to facilitate a thorough and speedy process. And, please, don’t fall prey to requests to extend deadlines or slow down the process. This project has been in the works for more than twenty years. That’s plenty of time for more than enough bites at the apple.

E-021.03

Thank you for visiting our community, for requesting our input, and for listening to what we have to say.

Thank you,

Jim Mathes  
303 Brownell Avenue  
New Bedford, Massachusetts

9 Bridge Street  
North Easton, MA 02356  
May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corp of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Mr. Sullivan:

This letter contains my comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the South Coast Rail Project.

According to MassDOT, the stated purpose of the proposed South Coast Rail Project is:

“to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities.”

The key phrase in the stated purpose is “meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA”, with “demand” being the most important word. *Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines demand as an urgent requirement. I do not believe there is an urgent requirement for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, and I found no evidence in the DEIS/DEIR draft that proves there is any actual demand. In fact a referenced paper, CTPS January 28, 2011 Memo “South Coast Rail Work Trips to Boston” suggesting an increase in demand is not included in the DEIS/DEIR draft. I was unable to locate a copy via the internet and my request to the Army Corp of Engineers was not fulfilled.

L-074.01

I say there is no demand for the South Coast Rail because I spent quite some time on the South Coast, I lived in Fairhaven, I graduated from UMass Dartmouth, I worked in Fall River and I still have friends who live on the South Coast. Very, very few people would consider commuting from Fall River/New Bedford to Boston, it is just too far and would take too much time. The large city of choice for Fall River/New Bedford is Providence, RI. I have asked my friends and colleagues that currently live on the South Coast what they would do if their work required them to go into Boston every day and they all gave the same response: If they didn’t like the job they would look for another, and if they wanted to stay in the job they would move closer to Boston.

I also question the ridership numbers given in the report, I just don’t think there will be over 4000 people riding the train daily from the South Coast. What makes me question these numbers is the reported number of riders for the bus alternatives: according to the report 2360 riders will take a bus that uses existing highway lanes, and 2100 will take the bus if an express lane is built. How does an express lane attract fewer riders? I believe the validity of the ridership modeling is questionable at best.

After reading most of the report and focusing in on what I think to be the important sections I feel that the Boston based commuter rail should not be extended to Fall River/New Bedford. The information provided in the DEIS/DEIR draft is not enough to justify the multiple-billion-dollar cost of the project and the arguments for the train just do not hold up under scrutiny.

Thank you,

Michael Mazzuca

May 22, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-3751

Sec. Richard K. Sullivan  
Exec. Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attn: MEPA, Aisling O'Shea  
100 Cambridge Street  
Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: South Coast Rail  
DEIR/DEIS Comment Letter  
Opposed to the "Stoughton Alternative

Dear Sirs:

I am writing as a concerned citizen of Massachusetts, and Stoughton resident. I find several main flaws in the recent report, in addition to many general concerns on all the SCR options.

The first flaw is that it appears the consultants did not review the option that included the elimination of the existing Stoughton Branch, when reviewing the operational feasibility of the of Attleboro option. The request for this review was formerly made in a prior comment period and acknowledged by the Corp. Yet it is not included now. It seems clear that the operation of the Attleboro line would be improved, especially at South Station with the elimination of the existing Stoughton Branch. This omission seems to leave the Corp open for criticism, or worse, at a latter date.

L-033.01

The second flaw I am concerned with is the consultant's mitigation of environmental issues only as it related to the normal construction and operation of a commuter rail line. They don't take into consideration accidents that can happen from commuter rail (diesel fuel spills) or freight operations-**which we all know will be coming**. So what does the MBTA and their consultants say (or do) when 10 carloads of PCB contaminated soils go



off the rails and into the **Hockomock Swamp** and close Easton drinking water wells? Or just two diesel commuter engines. Oh well, we did not model for that.

The third flaw is that the report does not appear to address the long-range plans for AMTRAK as we know exist. The MBTA should team with AMTRAK to make the needed improvements to the Northeast Corridor to facilitate this project, and others. With limited dollars available at all government levels, the money should be spent where it has the most impact with the long-range needs and goals in mind.

L-033.01

The fourth flaw I feel exists is ridership projections. All options will be shown to steal riders from existing options, rail and bus. Also, I feel that ridership projections in general should be questioned and revamped. The Greenbush line has proven, that if you build it, **they will not come**. It has been operational for over 3 years and suffers from chronically low ridership, and the congestion on Route 3 it was meant to relieve has not changed.

Some other general concerns include the following:

### 1. Middleborough Alternatives

The state must continue to seriously consider the “Middleborough Alternatives”; these options hold a hope of solving other looming transportation problems/opportunities. Specifically the development of a Middleboro casino, the continued development of the former Weymouth Naval Air station and extension of rail services to Cape Cod, all of which should be planned for rail or light rail service.

### 2. Economic Growth

In 1990 Governor Weld promised the Fall River/New Bedford area help in the areas of Economic Stimulus and transportation improvements. Unemployment and congestion of Route 24 south of Brockton were the problems. The solution as presented by folks in Boston was a new commuter rail line. I am not sure this is what FR/NB wanted, or needed. It is now 21 years later; their issues have not been solved, and will not be solved by a rail line to Boston. In 1998 several local State Representatives suggested just what they wanted: Route 24 improvements and tax incentives that would bring jobs directly to the area, just what they still need. The true solution is to improve the regional transportation infrastructure and **stimulate employment closer to people’s homes**.

L-033.02

### 3. Lack of Connectivity

This is a huge issue when you consider that funding this project takes funds from others. None of the \$1.4 Billion project cost will help get anybody from Fall River to New Bedford conveniently, or to Providence, or Bridgewater State College, or **Waltham**. **Unless you include a Rapid Bus piece**. For the rail options, the per rider construction cost, ride time (over 90 minutes) and ultimate rate subsidy are all ridiculous compared to other alternatives that have been discussed.

### 4. Cost to Build: \$500,000 per rider

#### 4. **State of MBTA Infrastructure**

It would appear based on the MBTA's own reports and news stories that the EOT should focus on "fixing it first" as proposed by Gov Romney in March 1995. This state of disrepair and operational failures, poor management of contracts just screams for the state to slow down and rethink this project.

L-033.02

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the DEIS/DEIR

Regards,

Gerald J. McDonald  
14 McPherson Road  
Stoughton, MA 02072

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**From:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 06, 2011 11:10 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** FW: DEIS (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

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**From:** gerry mcdonald [mailto:mchop2@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 02, 2011 7:29 PM  
**To:** Anacheke-nasemann, Alan R NAE  
**Subject:** SCR: DEIS

Dear Mr. Anacheke:

The DEIS on the SouthCoast rail is over 2,500 pages, I respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments.

E-009.01

Specifically, I would seek an additional 60 days. The time provided is not sufficient to review this document and provide useful comments.

Much is at stake for the state's transportation future, and environment, based on this report and the next steps.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gerald J McDonald  
14 McPherson Rd  
Stoughton, Ma 02072

4/2/11

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE



AD

May 23, 2011

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
Attn: MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RECEIVED  
JUN 01 2011  
MEPA

Re: South Coast Rail Project, DEIS/DEIR

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I have been living in Stoughton since 1983. I am submitting this letter to express my strong opposition to the Corps's draft report selecting the Stoughton Alternative as the LEDPA for the South Coast rail Project. Specifically, I have the following comments based on the Executive Summary ("ES") of the DEIS/DEIR.

L-091.01

First, the stated purpose of the project is "*to more fully meet* the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford..." If the demand for transportation is *fully* met, then there is no need to *more fully* meet it.

Second, the studies that form the economic basis for the project (ES at 3-4) are old and unreliable. All of the studies predate the severe economic crisis of 2008, which has created an economic sea change in the Commonwealth's economy.

Third, given the tremendous changes in the economy that have occurred since this project started, it would be far less costly and far more practical to enhance the existing bus system (see ES at 5) for a two- or three-year trial period to see if there is any significant demand for more public transportation into Boston. The Corps' rejection of

the no-build (enhanced bus) alternative is rooted in the conclusion that it “does not address the fundamental need for improved public transit service between New Bedford/Fall River and Boston...” (ES at 8) The Corps simply assumes the need for improved service, but such a finding is unsupported by any current, timely, and accurate studies.

L-091.01

Fourth, the Corps failed to take into consideration 2010 Census findings. More and more people are moving more and more to the suburbs and working less and less in large cities. More people work at home or remotely, and go to “the office” several days a month. Technology is replacing the need for transportation. As technology improves dramatically, the need for moving people 50 miles one-way on a daily basis by trains will decrease dramatically.


Fifth, the draft concludes: “The rail connection is projected to create between 3,500 and 3,800 net new jobs within the Commonwealth by 2030—about two-thirds of which would locate in the South Coast region with the remaining third in Boston-Cambridge and other communities outside the region.” (ES at 22) Two-thirds of 3,800 is 2,546, so we are talking about creating 2,546 jobs in the South Coast region over the next 20 years. As the project would cost \$2 billion (at a minimum), this translates to spending **\$800,000 per job created**. How absurd. Such expenditures are not in the public interest.

Sixth, the absurdity extends to the project’s cost per rider. It is projected that at most there will be 4,790 new riders. (ES at 8) Let’s say there are 5,000. At a minimum cost of \$2 billion, this translates to **\$400,000 per rider**.

The Stoughton Alternative will be a disaster for Stoughton, and it will not provide any meaningful benefits to the people of Fall River/New Bedford. At this point, the

project only benefits the bureaucrats and consultants who have made a small fortune through the years for a folly of the highest magnitude. The Stoughton Alternative would be a complete, unadulterated disaster, and that the Corps should not hesitate to reject it as the LEDPA .

Thank you.



Lynn E. McSweeney  
15 Wildwood Road  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
781-341-1684



May 23, 2011

Alan R. Anacheke-Nasemann  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
Attn: MEPA Office  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: South Coast Rail Project, DEIS/DEIR

Gentlemen:

Enclosed for filing is my opposition to the draft report, which concludes that The  
Stoughton Alternative is the LEDPA for this project. | L-038.01

Please include this opposition in the official record of your proceedings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,



Robert M. Mendillo  
15 Wildwood Road  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
781-341-1684  
robertmendillo@comcast.net

MAY24'11 RES DIV

**US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT**

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**IN RE: SOUTH COAST RAIL DEIS/DEIR  
FILE NUMBER: NAE-2007-00698**

**SUBMISSION OF ROBERT M. MENDILLO IN OPPOSITION TO THE STOUGHTON  
ALTERNATIVE BEING THE LEDPA**

**Dated: May 23, 2011**

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1. **Introduction**

As a resident of Stoughton since 1983, I am adamantly opposed to the South Coast Rail Project's Stoughton Alternative. Not only is the Stoughton Alternative not the LEDPA for MassDOT's pipe dream boondoggle project, The Stoughton Alternative would ruin Stoughton. It would also damage cities and towns north and south of Stoughton, and provide no appreciable benefits to the people of Fall River/New Bedford – who would be better served by having billions of dollars pumped into those communities rather than having it spent on a “Big Dig II” project that will saddle the Commonwealth with years and years of crushing debt. For the reasons explained below, the Corps' final report should determine that the Stoughton Alternative is not the LEDPA for the project.

2. **Background on the Town of Stoughton<sup>1</sup>**

A. **Community Setting**

The Town of Stoughton is located about 20 miles south of Boston and 30 miles north east of Providence. Stoughton is abutted by Canton, Avon, Sharon, Easton, Randolph, and Brockton. Stoughton is a medium-sized, primarily residential, ethnically diverse suburban community with a population of approximately 27,000 residents. It is an excellent place to live for those commuting to urban centers or other distant communities for work because there are three major highways within five miles of town: Route 24 to the east, Route 93 to the north, and Route 128/95 to the west. Stoughton also has access to regional transit,

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<sup>1</sup> This information is taken from the 2009 Town of Stoughton Affordable Housing Plan.

being served by bus from the Brockton Area Transit, and the Stoughton Station is the terminus for the MBTA commuter rail into Boston. This easy access to convenient transportation is a significant factor in attracting residents and businesses to Stoughton.

Stoughton has a history of manufacturing and an emerging cluster of regional retail stores, as well as a substantial base of land zoned for commercial and industrial purposes. The major commercial and industrial areas in town are located adjacent to Route 24 and along routes 138, 139, and 27, but smaller areas are interspersed with residential zones due to the community's industrial past.

The Town has significant protected open space resources, including the Bird Street Sanctuary, water department lands, recreational fields and a municipal golf course. Additional privately owned, but not protected, undeveloped lands are an important factor in the character of the community.

#### **B. Race**

Stoughton residents are predominantly white (87%). Among minority groups, African-Americans are the largest group (6%), followed by Hispanics and Asians at 2%. 3% of Stoughton residents considered themselves as "other" when responding to the census questions.

#### **C. Household Trends**

While Stoughton's population grew just a little over 1% in the 1990's, the number of households grew by 9%, and the average household size fell. Stoughton's households are a little bigger than the region's. The trend toward smaller

households is a nationwide phenomenon, driven largely by growing diversity of household types, lifestyle choices, and the aging population.

In Stoughton, 71% of all households are families and 29% are non-families. The proportion of families is down from 75% in 1990 and is considerably higher than the 61% for the region as a whole. Of all family households, 79% are married-couple families, 33% are married couples with children, 9% are single parents, and 12% are headed by a single adult without children. Of all non-family households, 84% live alone, and 34% are elders living alone.

Of all households in Stoughton, 24% are two-parent families with children, 7% are single-parent families, and 10% are elders living alone. Compared to area communities, Stoughton has more two-parent families with children, fewer non-families, more single heads of household, and fewer elders living alone.

#### **D. Resident Workforce**

Stoughton's population grew about 1.4% in the 1990's, but the number of adults in the workforce declined by 2.2% according to the 2000 U. S. Census. Historical data from the state show the number of Stoughton residents active in the workforce growing fairly steadily, adding about 500 since 1990 to total almost 15,700 in 2001. Nonetheless, Stoughton residents have an average residential income that is tenth lowest of the 101 communities in the MAPC region (see April 13, 2010 letter to the Corps from the Stoughton Board of Selectmen).

The number of jobs in Town has shown less steady progress, rising to a peak of almost 14,000 in 1995, before declining to about 12,500 in the latest annual data. The ratio of jobs to working residents rose to over 0.9 before declining to around



0.8, indicating that there is less than 1 part-or full-time job in Stoughton for every working resident. This puts Stoughton near the middle of regional communities in terms of the ratio of jobs to workers, with about half the value of neighboring Canton and nearly twice that of Sharon.

Just over 80% of Stoughton's working resident commuted to other communities in 2000, with the largest number (19%) working in Boston, followed by 9% in Canton. Those residents who worked for Stoughton employers filled over 20% of the jobs in town.<sup>2</sup>

#### **E. Occupational, Educational, and Income Profile**

The occupational profile of Stoughton residents mirrors that of the region, with the 2000 U. S. Census showing the greatest number of residents in managerial and professional occupations, followed by sales, office work and services. The proportion of Stoughton workers in managerial occupations is considerably lower than the region's at 36%, even though that category grew more quickly in the 1990's in the town (34% versus 32% regionally). Growth in managerial and professional occupations is consistent with national trends toward "knowledge-based" work and services and away from production of goods. Production and construction categories declined in Stoughton in the 1990's but represent a larger proportion of the local workforce than region-wide.

The growth of managerial and professional occupations accompanies rising education levels. While Stoughton's population over age 25 increased by 6.6% in the 1990's, the number of residents having a college degree jumped by a third. The

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<sup>2</sup> These figures are based on the 2000 U. S. Census, and thus do not factor in likely job loss created by more difficult economic times during the past three years.

Town's residents are still less likely to have a college degree (28% of residents, compared to 41% for the region), both for bachelor's and advanced degrees (note that the metropolitan Boston work force is one of the most highly educated in the U. S.). The number of adults having high school degrees or less fell less than they did regionally, and represent a larger proportion of adults in Stoughton.

#### **F. Housing Demand**

Stoughton is projected to see an increase in population of over 20% between 2000 and 2030. The population is driven by trends on the local, state, and national level as household size decreases. As a result Stoughton can expect:

- A slight decline in the number of both pre-school and school-age children;
- a small increase, in the household-formation years, followed by a slight decrease between 2020 and 2030;
- a slight increase, followed by a slight decline in trade-up demand;
- a significant growth in empty-nesters; and
- a significant increase in seniors.

While the general trends, driven by the aging of the baby-boomers, are similar to the region as a whole, there are some differences. Stoughton's decline in school-age children is predicted to be both sooner and steeper than the region; the 2010 decline in the household-formation years runs counter to regional growth patterns; and the decline in trade-ups is much steeper. Only the older groups (age 55+) precisely track regional trends.

#### **G. Socio-economic Profile Summary and Conclusions**

- Stoughton's population is projected to increase 20% between 2000 and 2030.
- Family households continue to decrease as a percentage of total households.
- Stoughton is experiencing a slight decline in pre-school children and young adults (20-34 years) while empty nesters and seniors increase.
- Stoughton residents are more educated than in the past, but, relative to the region, they have less formal schooling and are more likely to pursue occupations in construction, production, and sales and office work, and less likely to be in managerial and professional occupations.
- Stoughton hosts about three full or part-time jobs for every four working residents, and 80% of its residents commute to other communities. Those who work in Town fill about 20% of local jobs.
- Management/professional is the largest employment type in Stoughton, followed by office, services and retail.
- Management/professional and service jobs increased 1990 to 2000, and construction and manufacturing declined during the same period.

### 3. **Stoughton's Existing Rail Service and Usage**

The Stoughton to Boston commuter rail line operates Monday through Friday only from Stoughton Station to South Station. The one-way trip is scheduled at 35 to 37 minutes.

Stoughton Station, which was built in 1888 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, is located in the heart of downtown, and is about a two-minute walk from Town Hall. The current schedules are as follows:

#### **Inbound to Boston**

##### **AM**

6:28  
6:56  
7:48

#### **Outbound to Stoughton**

##### **AM**

5:15  
5:35  
7:02



8:28  
9:40  
10:40

**PM**

2:20  
3:23  
5:00  
5:45  
6:42  
7:19  
7:35  
8:50  
9:50  
11:53

7:40  
8:50  
9:45

**PM**

1:20  
2:25  
3:30  
4:05  
4:50  
5:15  
5:45  
6:30  
7:45  
8:55  
11:00

Current fares are \$5.75 one way, and \$186.00 for a monthly pass.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning at Stoughton Station, the train moves on one track covering 3.8 miles from the station to the Canton line. There are eight at-grade crossing along the route.

The train does not operate on Saturdays and Sundays, and there is no freight traffic through town.

It is estimated that about 200-300 cars are parked by passengers in lots at and adjacent to the Stoughton Station.

Although no hard numbers are available, it is believed that only a handful of people (if any) reverse commute – i.e. live in Boston and commute on the train to work in Stoughton.

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<sup>3</sup> This is from the MBTA's January 2010 Schedule.

#### 4. **History of the South Coast Rail Project and the Stoughton Alternative**

Beginning decades ago, when the world and the economy were much different, certain Massachusetts politicians began discussing the idea of creating commuter rail service between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area. Given the economic challenges facing the Fall River/New Bedford area, it was asserted that extending commuter train service to that area would allow residents to commute to Boston for good and better paying jobs.

Although presumably motivated by good intentions, the proponents' idea was not realistic. The notion that people would take a 90-minute train ride twice a day at a likely cost of over \$300 per month to work in Boston was fanciful at best. Nonetheless, it gained traction and MassDOT studied the matter further.

Last decade, however, Governor Romney made clear that he was not interested in funding or building the project, and efforts stopped until the election of Governor Patrick, who restarted interest in the project.

Residents and elected officials of the South Coast area have not expressed enthusiasm for the project at such. Support for the project appears to be only on a "its better than nothing" basis. Public opinion and common sense indicate that most people and government officials from that area would prefer that money be spent in that area on jobs, education and training, infrastructure, industrial parks, and harbor development – to create jobs and expand the tax base in New Bedford/Fall River for those cities' residents and neighbors.

Currently, the Stoughton line consists of a single track covering 3.8 miles. Under the Stoughton Alternative, there would be a double track covering an additional three or four miles in town. Moreover, if an electric train is used, there would be numerous huge and unsightly “catenary system poles” and overhead electric wires covering the entire distance.

5. **EOT’s Application and The Corps’ November 10, 2008 Public Notice.**

On November 10, 2008, the Corps issued a public notice regarding its statutory obligation to prepare an EIS and EIR on MassDOT’s proposal to establish passenger rail service between Boston and New Bedford/Fall River. The public notice stated that the EIS/EIR would evaluate a range of alternative transit routes in order to determine the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (“LEDPA”) under applicable federal law. Alternative routes included four rail options: The Attleboro Alternative, the Stoughton Alternative, the Middleborough Alternative, and the Attleboro-Middleborough Hybrid Alternative. In addition, a Rapid Bus Alternative using modified highway infrastructure was included, as well as a No Build/Transportation Service Management Alternative. The notice also stated that other alternatives for evaluation could be identified.

6. **The September 30, 2009 Town Meeting Resolution Against the Stoughton Alternative.**

Based upon the recommendations of its South Coast Rail Advisory Committee, its difficulties in working with MassDOT, and the belief that MassDOT’s plans for the South Coast Rail were advancing, the Board of Selectmen brought the



project to the attention of Town Meeting held on September 30, 2009. Town Meeting responded with nearly unanimous opposition to the Stoughton Alternative.

First, by a vote of 119 to 8, Town Meeting approved an article providing the Board of Selectmen with \$20,000 to respond to the EIS/EIR and "to prepare for litigation as considered necessary ... to keep the train from extending to Fall River and New Bedford through Stoughton unless the requirements prescribed by the Town of Stoughton, as represented by the Board of Selectmen, are included firmly in the design of and funding for the South Coast Rail Project."

Immediately after the approval of this article, Town Meeting by voice vote adopted a resolution strongly opposing the Stoughton Alternative as "clearly harmful to the best interests, needs, and public safety of the Town." The entire resolution stated as follows:

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN MEETING OF STOUGHTON,  
MASSACHUSETTS REGARDING THE SOUTH COAST RAIL  
PROJECT**

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"WHEREAS, the South Coast Rail Project (Project) constitutes an initiative by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) to address its solution to existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River /New Bedford and Boston, and EOT has identified the extension of existing commuter rail service between Stoughton and Boston as its primary alternative (the Stoughton Alternative) for achieving the Project's goals;

WHEREAS, in 2000 the Board of Selectmen approved a resolution opposing the Stoughton Alternative, and this year established the South Coast Rail Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), a committee of volunteers to review the potential impact on the Town's residents and environment should the Stoughton

Alternative be approved and to provide recommendations to the Board;

WHEREAS, on July 21, 2009, the Advisory Committee made a presentation to the Board indicating EOT's position that it would not mitigate (as it did in Hingham) the impact of the Project on the safety, traffic, and other concerns expressed by the Town, and the Advisory Committee recommended that the currently proposed Stoughton Alternative be strongly opposed as being clearly harmful to the best interests, needs, and public safety of the Town;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is resolved as follows:

1. The Town Meeting of Stoughton hereby expresses its firm and strong opposition to the Project and the currently proposed Stoughton Alternative.

2. The Town Meeting of Stoughton hereby urged all residents of the Town, and town Officials and Boards, to make their best efforts to express to local state, federal officials, neighboring communities, news agencies, fellow residents, and the public their firm and strong opposition to the Project and the currently proposed Stoughton Alternative.

SO RESOLVED by a vote of Town Meeting on September 30, 2009."

7. **The Corps' DEIS/DEIR Incorrectly Concludes That Stoughton Alternative Is the LEDPA for the Project.**

On March 23, 2011, the Corps released for comment its DEIS/DEIR, which concluded that the Stoughton Alternative was the LEDPA for the project. Despite repeated requests from local and state officials and residents of towns affected by the proposal, the Corps refused to extend the May 27, 2011 deadline for responding to the 2,500 page draft report. Moreover, the Corps held a May 4, 2011 hearing on the draft report in Mansfield—instead of in Stoughton,

L-038.03

Easton, Canton or any other town that is on the route of the Stoughton Alternative. The Corps' refusal to grant citizens and towns any more time to respond to the draft report, and its refusal to hold a meeting in a town on the Stoughton Alternative's route, reflects a fundamental disregard for Stoughton, its citizens, and other communities and citizens that would be most affected by implementation of the Stoughton Alternative. It is certainly hoped that in reviewing these comments and those submitted by others, that the Corps will use its best efforts to focus on the actual day-to-day impact that such a monstrosity of a project would have on the people who live and work in Stoughton.

L-038.03

**A. The Stoughton Alternative Would Destroy Downtown Stoughton.**

Downtown Stoughton is still the hub of Stoughton. Unfortunately, it is almost blighted now. The Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and other town officials and groups are, however, actively considering plans for making it vibrant and attractive under the "smart growth" concepts that are being championed by local and statewide planners.

L-038.04

The Stoughton Alternative is the enemy of smart growth. The extension of the train would create a Berlin Wall of ugliness, congestion, and discontent that would rip the downtown in half and cause everyone to ignore it at all costs. The Stoughton Alternative would turn downtown Stoughton into a ghost town, whose



main activity would be noisy, long trains tying up traffic and zipping through at dangerous speeds.

The ugliness and other negative effects of the Stoughton Alternative would kill any potential for private interest/investment in the downtown. It would render the existing historic train station useless and unused, and would hinder or eliminate the ability of residents to walk freely downtown.

L-038.04

MassDOT has not identified one benefit that the Stoughton Alternative would provide to the downtown area – and that is because there is no benefit. Worse than simply providing no benefit, the Stoughton Alternative would kill downtown, sacrificing it on an altar of developing Fall River and New Bedford. The social injustice of such a proposal is outrageous and manifestly unfair to the Town. Simply put, the Stoughton Alternative implements MassDOT's brutal and brazen bureaucratic decision to kill Stoughton in order to advance its cockamamie idea for revitalizing New Bedford/Fall River.

Moreover, as reported in The Boston Globe on May 18, 2011 (just last week), commuter rail ridership in 2010 was down 6.8% from 2008. This is according to the MBTA's own report, the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of "MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics." This is no time to be spending \$3 billion on a new train that would probably have the longest, most expensive, and least utilized trip in the system.

**B. The Stoughton Alternative Would Jeopardize the Town's Safety and Image.**

The Stoughton Alternative unquestionably means many, many, many more trains through Town. The Corps certainly knows—without the need for any

L-038.05

studies— that more trains means more tracks, more crossings, faster trains, freight trains, longer trains, more noise, more congestion, more whistles, more wind, more vibration, more days of trains running, more hours of trains running, more blocking of streets, more traffic, more emergencies, more injuries, more train-related police work, more pollution, more dirt, more frustration, and more discontent. This is all inevitable, because it is part and parcel of a train system running through downtown.

L-038.05

The Stoughton Alternative thus would inevitably jeopardize the Town's safety and injure Stoughton's quality of life, reputation, self-confidence and pride.

Once again, the Stoughton Alternative does nothing but hurt Stoughton, and MassDOT does not even claim that it would do anything good.

**C. The Stoughton Alternative Would Cause Irreparable  
Socioeconomic Harm to Stoughton.**

L-038.06

The Stoughton Alternative will enhance the socioeconomic status of Stoughton. The Stoughton Alternative – with all of the negatives outlined above – will cause people to leave town, will lower property values, will lower the tax base, and will hurt the schools. The Stoughton Alternative will make Stoughton a worse place to see, visit, live in, invest in, work in, go to school, and raise healthy families. MassDOT's response? It just doesn't care. It only cares about its fanatical obsession with building a railroad—extending 19<sup>th</sup> century transportation that will not help New Bedford/Fall River in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

In terms of social justice and socioeconomic development for Stoughton, the Stoughton Alternative would be a deathblow. By the time construction begins,

Stoughton will be reeling. By the time the first virtually empty train passes through,  
Stoughton will be a town in name only.



**D. Mitigation Would Not Cure the Stoughton Alternative.**

MassDOT has stated repeatedly in public that it is offering no mitigation to Stoughton. It has made clear that it will not consider a tunnel through the downtown area as was done in Hingham for the Greenbush line. Stoughton is not Hingham, and MassDOT obviously does not care to give Stoughton anything. MassDOT is engaging in class warfare, having determined that Stoughton and its people simply are not worthy of the consideration that the more educated, more influential, more affluent, and less diverse people of Hingham were given to establish a Greenbush line—a line that is woefully underutilized.

L-038.07

Moreover, MassDOT plans to abandon the existing Stoughton Station, which is a further indication of its callous approach to Stoughton: the most attractive and historic station on the line is being cast aside in the rush to rush trains through town.

**8. The Rapid Bus Alternative is the LEDPA.**

The Rapid Bus Alternative is better than any of the train alternatives for a number of reasons.

First, the bus system is less costly to build and maintain.

Second, in terms of “classic” environmental impact, the bus is less damaging and disruptive. The rapid bus would be built on or immediately adjacent to existing highway routes, and would not require the development of hundreds of miles of train track through areas that have little or no development.

L-038.08

Third, transportation studies and commentators have in recent years championed rapid bus service over rail because it is environmentally better than

trains. See e.g. Baltimore Business Journal, January 16, 2009 (“Enhanced buses are better than light-rail cars along the proposed Purple Line in Maryland, according to a study from the World Resources Institute”); On Earth Magazine, L. Gravitz (January 11, 2010) (“Bus rapid transit has begun to emerge as an appealing, cost effective alternative to trains in many metropolitan regions in the U. S.”); Rocky Mountain News, R. O’Toole (Feb. 21, 2009) (bus rapid transit better than trains in hard times, noting that “light-rail lines use as much energy and generate more greenhouse gases per passenger-mile than the average SUV”); Transform, [transformca.org/brt/key-benefits-bus-rapid-transit-south-bay](http://transformca.org/brt/key-benefits-bus-rapid-transit-south-bay) (“Key Benefits” of Bus Rapid Transit in the South Bay, California area include “faster service, increasing public transportation ridership, better air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, affordable and cost effective, and socially just and equitable”); Instituto Nacional de Ecologia, The Benefits and Costs of a Bus Rapid Transit System in Mexico City” (Final Report, May 2008 (benefits include “the reduction in local emissions and resultant health impacts, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and the reduction in travel time”); Diesel Fuel News, J. Peckham (July 7, 2003) (“Diesel-electric hybrid ‘bus rapid transit’ (BRT) not only is vastly cheaper to build and operate than electric train Metro rail systems, but also produces less emissions once electric generation emissions are included,” in reporting on a study by the Washington, D. C. Breakthrough Technologies Institute, entitled: “The Electric Rail Dilemma: Clean Transportation from Dirty Electricity?”); Climate Progress, “Making Buses Cool Again” (July 19, 2009) (bus rapid transit “could cut nearly three times more emissions than light-rail powered by coal-based

L-038.08

electricity”); Christian Science Monitor, J. Lowe (June 9, 2009) (reporting University of California at Berkley study that train can be worse for climate than plane, and that traveling in a gas-guzzling SUV can be better than taking a train into the city from suburbia).

The Rapid Bus Alternative would also eliminate the danger of freight trains. Freight trains pose a special danger to Stoughton. The website for the railway industry, railway-technology.com, recognizes that “Freight trains are particularly guilty of noise pollution....” In 2010, a super freight train – extending some 3 ½ miles – rolled through Southern California over the weekend. The 18,000-foot-long train was two to three times the length of a typical freight train. It ran at up to 70 mph, and took 3 to 5 minutes to clear a grade crossing. Los Angeles Times, “Safety, traffic concerns raised when 3.5 mile-long freight train rolls through L. A. Basin” (Jan. 12, 2010). The article also reported that there are no state or federal limits on the length of trains.

L-038.08

The Rapid Bus Alternative would create far less damaging problems than any of the train alternatives. Moreover, rail service into South Station is already overly congested. The Rapid Bus Alternative would avoid further congestion.

Across the country, rapid transit service is being seen as a greener, less expensive, and easier way for persons to commute. Indeed, this is true around the world. As Time magazine recently reported (May 16, 2011), Curitiba, Brazil, “the original smart city,” has just opened a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network instead of a commuter rail or subway system, and, “At least 83 cities worldwide have copied Curitiba’s BRT system.” The bus would service the Fall River/New Bedford area



without causing the problems, dangers and complaints that are an inescapable aspect of any of the train alternatives.

L-038.08

The Rapid Bus Alternative would give Stoughton the opportunity to develop the town in a smart growth manner, to rebuild the downtown, and to maintain and enhance the Town's aesthetic and socioeconomic health.

In choosing between train and rapid bus alternatives, there appear to be no projects where the Corps has determined that a train and not a rapid bus was the LEDPA. This project should not be the first.

9. **Conclusion**

For all of the reasons stated above, the Stoughton Alternative is not the LEDPA. The Stoughton Alternative would destroy Stoughton based on the arrogant and foolish bet that the train might bring meaningful economic benefit to another area of the Commonwealth. Stoughton should not have to pay the price for the bureaucratic folly and condescension that motivates MassDOT. To the extent that there is any LEDPA for this project, it is the Rapid Bus.



Robert M. Mendillo  
Wildwood Road  
Stoughton, MA 02072  
781-341-1684

PAGE 1 OF 3

436 Richardson Avenue  
Attleboro, Massachusetts 02703  
Phone: 508-431-2312  
May 23, 2011

**TO:**

**Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann**  
**U. S. Army Corps of Engineers**  
**New England District**  
**696 Virginia Road**  
**Concord, Ma. 01742-2751**

**COPY TO:**

**Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr., EOEEA**  
**ATTN: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)**  
**100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900**  
**Boston, Ma. 02114**

**SUBJECT: SOUTH COAST RAIL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**IMPACT STATEMENT/ DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**IMPACT REPORT (DEIS/DEIR)**

**DEAR Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:**

**NONE of the Attleboro hybrid, bypass or alternatives should be selected for the proposed Fall River/New Bedford South Coast Rail Project.**

**Of all the alternatives I support the Stoughton Route with Dean Street and without Whittendon because (1) it is the most direct, (2) offers the most ridership, (3) it has the best trip time, (4) its reduced travel time is the advantage over the other options, (5) less acres of wetlands will be taken, (6) it is the only direct straight route to Boston and (7) it is**

L-039.01

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cost/benefit effective at \$1.5 to \$1.9 Billion.

L-039.01

Stoughton (without Whittendon) with Dean Street is the best because of these facts:

**FACT:** It has the best cost/ benefit/ effectiveness versus the others

**FACT:** The trip time is 72-74 minutes, which is better than the Other alternatives.

**FACT:** Less acres of wetlands will be taken compared to the Attleboro By-pass and alternatives. Stoughton is 6.74 acres versus Attleboro of 7.82 to 8.50 acres. Middleboro is 3.61 acres.

**FACT:** It is compatible with the existing rail system.

**FACT:** It is a STRAIGHT SHOT to Boston.

**FACT:** It adds another direct rail line to Boston.

**FACT:** Freight trains with container, bulk, tanker or other shipments can move faster from cargo ships or businesses between Boston, New Bedford or Fall River.

**FACT:** There would be no additional annual train assessment for Attleboro to pay since the train will not stop or pass thru the Attleboro area.

**FACT:** The WHITTENDON SITE for a station should be eliminated since it will add to the trip time on the trains.

**FACT:** The DEAN STREET SITE for a station should be used since it would benefit the City of Taunton and nearby towns for train ridership, convenient shopping & parking and least number of grade crossings.

**FACT:** The WHITTENDON SITE for a station would result in 14 to 15 at grade crossing which would unnecessarily cripple the center of the City of Taunton.

I submit the following FACTS concerning the ATTLEBORO BY-PASS ALTERNATIVE:

**FACT:** The electrification of the Boston to New York line for the Acela Train has dramatically increased the train noise from freight trains and the double tiering of Passenger Trains up and down Richardson Avenue.

L-039.02



**FACT:** The cement footings for the electrification installation of the Boston to New York rail line caused house foundation cracks. This could happen for the Attleboro By-Pass to myself and the 35-homes across the street and the 44-homes at Misty Meadows and 49-Condos on the other side of the National Grid High Voltage Transmission Lines. These high voltage transmission lines carry thousands of volts and would prove disastrous and disruptive if a train accident occurred.

L-039.02

**FACT:** Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro is a Regional Hospital which services Norton and Mansfield. Richardson Avenue and Pleasant Street (Route 123) are used day and night by their ambulances to take emergency patients to the Sturdy Memorial Hospital.

**FACT:** The noise and vibration from these passenger and freight trains would be markedly increased compared to the Noise of the freight and passenger trains on the Boston to New York electrified rail line because of the proximity to these homes and condos.

**I SUPPORT THE STOUGHTON ALTERNATIVE WITH THE DEAN STREET STATION AND THE ELIMINATION OF THE WHITTENDON STATION.**

L-039.03

**I RECOMMEND this Stoughton Rail Alternative to the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs AS the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).**

Sincerely,



**DONALD J. MICHAUD  
436 RICHARDSON AVENUE  
ATTLEBORO, MA. 02703  
EMAIL: [donmichaud@peoplepc.com](mailto:donmichaud@peoplepc.com)**

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**From:** Louise Morse [wlkdc@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 14, 2011 12:08 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Southeastern Mass Rail Extension

E-035.01

I am a resident of Easton, for over fifty years. I would like to be recorded as favoring the rail extension through Stoughton, Easton and Raynham to Fall River and New Bedford.

William J. Morse  
71 Allen Road  
N. Easton, MA 02356

May 26, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: [SCREIS@USACE.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@USACE.army.mil)

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: [aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us](mailto:aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us)

Re: Comments on the South Coast Rail Line, Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen and Stoughton resident. My purpose in writing to you is to provide my comments on the South Coast Rail Line and on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report.

I am opposed to the South Coast Rail going through Stoughton. There is so much to say and to show to your agency in hopes of swaying the Army Corp of Engineers **NOT** to go forward with the Stoughton Alternative. Stoughton is a town that was incorporated in 1726, some 50 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The town has much to offer people living here and to those wishing to settle here due to its proximity to the routes 24, 95, 495 and to the city of Boston. Stoughton's unique characteristics should not be altered or destroyed for other cities that wish to have a commuter rail. I believe that towns and cities should not be pitted against one another by our government or any government just to fulfill promises, no matter how many studies have been conducted and controlled in an effort to provide a favorable outcome to build this rail line.

L-078.01

I believe that this proposed rail plan reveals several shortcomings. **Public Safety** is my number one concern. There is a very large gaping public safety threat if this proposed rail line comes through Stoughton. The proposed plan would have two train tracks through Stoughton Center with the double track being extended from Easton through Stoughton to Canton and these tracks are within close proximity to three schools (Stoughton High, Middle and the West Schools). Add this fact to the high number (seven) of road crossings and the end result is a very real public safety threat. No matter how one mitigates this public safety threat, children's lives are at stake along with the lives of the vehicle occupants that come in contact with a moving train. In other

L-078.02



towns and cities across our state and across the nation, children and adults do get injured and killed by trains. Mitigating the public safety issues by installing safety mechanisms or crossing arms and bells did not prevent these injuries or deaths. As I review this plan, the town of Stoughton is literally cut in half by these two tracks. Traffic during rush hour on Central Street is already backed up to Route 138. Allowing additional trains to come through Stoughton, I believe creates additional burdens on an already difficult traffic situation. Additionally, public safety vehicles may be impacted waiting for trains to pass at the crossings thus having the potential to increase the emergency response times to Stoughton residents.

L-078.02

I believe that our **Environment** is at risk if this proposed rail line comes through Stoughton. The environment is everyone's concern. The proposed line will go through the Hockomock Swap. This swamp has received the designation of ACEC, Area of Critical Environmental Concern by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Per the public web site *MASS.GOV*, the Hockomock Swamp and associated wetlands and water bodies comprise the largest vegetated wetland system in Massachusetts. This area contains 16,950 acres. This website also notes the following:

L-078.03

*"The Hockomock Swamp is a vast natural and scenic area. Because of its size, it is a unique and irreplaceable wildlife habitat. It is also the location of at least 13 rare and endangered species. According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the archaeological sites in the vicinity of this wetland complex are known to span a period of 9000 years; the potential quality and significance of the archaeological resources are enormous. Productive agricultural lands are located on the uplands adjacent to the wetlands, brooks, and rivers."*

As you can see, the Hockomock Swamp is an unique and an irreplaceable wildlife habitat. I am not an environmental expert by any means. But what I do know is that a train going through this area and/or any chemicals that may fall into this body of water would cause harm and more than likely irreversible harm.

I read through the reviews of the environmental issues by the consultants and these reports do not even broach the various subjects of hazardous materials that can be carried by trains. The study, at least what I can see, only studies the trestle or track that would be built in this swamp. Nothing has been reviewed, discussed nor studied the impact of an environmental spill that can occur from diesel fuel or from other chemicals carried by freight trains. Can a reasonable person conclude that since the various chemicals that may be carried by a freight train have not been discussed, thus lead to a conclusion that NO chemicals or other hazardous materials will be allowed on this proposed South Coast Rail? I would like to get confirmation on this issue from the Army Corps of Engineers. If freight trains with chemicals and hazardous waste will be allowed then where are the studies for the South Coast Rail? What would happen if a rail car carrying chlorine leaked in the middle of Stoughton Center or in Hockomock Swamp? Where are the studies for the South Coast Rail of potential explosions or spills from train cars carrying various fuels or combustible chemicals? The consultants should have reported on these concerns.

L-078.04

I believe **Funding** is another real issue that tends to be never fully adequate. To build a new rail line while the current lines suffer from lagging or inadequate funding, I believe is not efficient. A public report issued on November 1, 2009, entitled *MBTA Review* documents safety issues and

L-078.05

financial concerns. On page 22 of this public report states the following. *“The MBTA has accomplished many impressive achievements in enhancing safety and service, yet the fact remains that it is dealing with an extensive, aging infrastructure that requires continuous maintenance, refurbishment and replacement. Unfortunately, the cost of the projects required to address these concerns far exceeds the MBTA’s capital improvement budget, which is constrained by the structural deficit discussed in the previous section. As a result, many projects that would address critical safety or system reliability issues are not funded each year.”*

L-078.05

I understand that the South Coast Rail plan may cost around \$1 billion. Wouldn’t this money be better spent supporting the current infrastructure of the MBTA and not towards building another rail line that will just cost more monies to maintain?

Lastly, I believe in the science and benefits of **Technology** that will in the foreseeable future allow more commuters to work from home and in essence, telecommute. This technology, in my opinion is becoming more and more acceptable and may lead to small but measureable declines in the number of daily commuters whether they are by vehicle or mass transit. I believe that the ridership projections for the South Coast Rail are a bit too aggressive. Given the cost of a daily roundtrip ticket versus carpooling, use of buses and the coming of age of telecommuting, the ridership projections are probably high.

L-078.06

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Robert Mullen  
19 Clover Lane  
Stoughton, MA 02072

Date May 10, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil  
fax: 978-318-8303

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery.

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I've attended the decades of South Coast Rail  
public hearings for my own benefit as well as the  
thousands of Fall River students I promised that  
new, faster, cleaner and easier transportation  
to Boston was eminent. It has been a discouraging  
project mired in the discontent of the more affluent  
populace of our towns to the north, the likes of  
Easton, North Easton, Mansfield to name a few.  
By the way, all of whom are enjoying and have  
enjoyed what we're wishing to make a reality.

Having been an Earth Science teacher it goes  
without saying that the Stoughton Alternative  
is our best shot. Thanks to the DEIS/DEIR's  
comprehensive studies we should be poised to

L-022.01

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get this project "on track,"!

Having been in Florida this winter, I read with great interest that Republican Governor Rick Scott rejected plans for an 85 mile high speed link between Tampa and Orlando. He turned down 2 billion dollars in federal money. (90% of rail financing)  
Voila, I thought ... here's our chance to get a desperately needed 60 mile train to Boston. Needless to say, our governor is a Democrat, a friend of President Obama and supposedly an advocate of rail between Boston and the Fall River New Bedford areas. Vice President Joseph Biden has called for spending 53 billion dollars on passenger trains and high-speed rail projects over the next 6 years. If that be the case, maybe, just maybe I'll see it in my lifetime and I am now 71 years of age.

A speaker at the New Bedford hearing on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 11  
mentioned the many sporting events he'd like to attend, but the hassle of traffic, parking fees, <sup>etc.</sup> is daunting. I would like to take this opportunity to also include the many cultural events I miss for those same reasons. An even bigger and more important point

L-022.02

is that we're so close to the best medical facilities in the world and yet so far due to that horrendous Route 24 traffic.

Going to college in North Easton was a breeze back in the late fifties and Route 24 ended in Stoughton at that time. Now the horror show begins at 140 where the New Bedford people join us. I cringe at the amount of fuel wasted (and now the cost is prohibitive) and the amount of carbon dioxide entering our atmosphere!

I end with the specter of fatalities that such crowded roadways engender. How many more deaths and crashes are you willing to be responsible for?

L-022.03

I agree with many of the speakers and local politicians that we've studied this to death. The new rail is nothing but a win, win opportunity for us to encompass NOW!

Pauline C. Nadeau

Signature

Pauline C. Nadeau

PRINT Name

30 Tickle Rd

Address

Westport, MA 02790

cc: Hon. Deval Patrick  
U.S. Sen. John F. Kerry  
U.S. Sen. Scott Brown  
U.S. Rep. Barney Frank  
U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern

cc: Kristina Egan  
Fall River Herald News  
New Bedford Standard Times  
Providence Journal - East Bay Edition

---

**From:** Linda Palmieri [PalmieriL@southcoast.org]

**Sent:** Saturday, May 28, 2011 11:35 AM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Cc:** aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us

**Subject:** support of rail line to South Coast

Please consider this email as a voice of support for the South Coast rail line!

The Stoughton route is the best of all that are proposed.

It is more direct route that will provide the shortest commuting time - and used of electric system will be environmentally friendly. It will be amenable to future technologies.

E-062.01

Thank you!

Linda L. Palmieri  
Southcoast Health System  
MIS Education Coordinator  
CMH: (508) 679-7232  
SLH: (508) 961-5102

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:**

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**From:** Dennis P. Paquette [dpaquette@umassd.edu]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 05, 2011 4:14 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** Comuter Rail to South Coast

I agree with the conclusions that identify the Stoughton alternative as providing the best service to the communities in the South Coast region and providing the least environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective. Also, the fact that the Stoughton route follows rail beds that were in use a little over fifty years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.

E-022.01

I believe the final report should include double tracking the rail lines to provide future capacity and faster service. It is important that any design, permitting, and building of the rail service be completed with an eye towards enhancing or expanding the service in the future. In addition, I also believe that travel time and frequency of service will be important factors to the success of this project. To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel time from the South Coast to Boston South Station be no more than seventy minutes. Shorter commuting time gives businesses greater access to more workers with specialized skills, while residents of the region gain connectivity to employment opportunities along the Route 128 corridor and in the business districts of Boston.

E-022.02

I also encourage full service throughout the day to meet demand and encourage ridership. A minimum of three trains in the morning peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak period should be utilized. This includes full weekend service and inter-city service between Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River to encourage regional mobility. I would also like to see a late evening train service to Boston to be considered for residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service would help support our growing tourism economy by connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our national park, our ferry service to Martha's Vineyard, and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene here in the South Coast.

I believe commuter rail extension is critical to economic development and growth in the region and in keeping with long-range "Smart Growth" planning strategies that support the environment and encourage development around priority development areas. Commuter rail extension to the South Coast will also help meet existing and future demand for public transportation and enhance regional mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region by reducing congestion and increasing travel choice. I encourage the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This is an important project for the South Coast region. The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a 50-mile radius of Boston without rail transit service, service that will provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the state. We have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for this process to be completed, so that the state can move onto the next critical step in the project.

E-022.03

Thank you,  
Dennis Paquette  
Director of Business Education & Lifelong Learning UMass  
Dartmouth  
Ambassador New Bedford & Fall River Chambers of Commerce

**From:** ~ DP [rwp99@live.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2011 8:57 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** Proposed MBTA train extension -- public comments

Daniel P. Paré  
 99 Sheridan St.  
 Easton, MA 02356  
 (508)-238-4575

May 13, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
 Army Corps of Engineers  
 696 Virginia Road  
 Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I understand you are welcoming public comments regarding the South Coast Rail group's proposed expansion of the MBTA commuter rail line into Easton and south to New Bedford and Fall River. I wish to contribute mine.

I believe that the benefits of such a train line do not outweigh the costs. As a citizen who thinks care for the environment should be one of our priorities, I appreciate the concept of robust public transportation. So I note the irony that the proposed Stoughton line extension will probably be more of an environmental drawback than a boon. A new train through Easton will cause more environmental fallout than another South Coast Rail proposal, a rapid bus line on a designated highway lane. Whereas the bus project would emerge from highways already in place, the train line would require a new train service running through the sensitive Hockomock Swamp region, valuable to our drinking water and to our local ecology in general. It is also questionable that the train line would actually have much of a ridership, making it even harder to justify its heavy financial and environmental costs.

E-033.01

I also worry that a new fleet of trains, especially diesel fuel trains, may wind up obsolete almost before it starts service. As greener energy technologies arrive, we will be stuck with an ecologically- and economically-backwards system.

Other costs of the proposed train line include:

\* Extending the Stoughton train line will cost much more money than the proposed rapid bus line -- so much so, in fact, that my state congresswoman, Rep. Geraldine Creedon, commented to me that the funding for the project is "not sustainable."

\* The potential arrival of a Middleboro casino will pose traffic and transportation needs for which an Easton rail line does nothing. Perhaps a rapid bus line, running on the highways through and near Middleboro, will serve these needs. (The now-discarded proposal to expand Middleboro train service may have also accomplished this.)

E-033.02

\* The train would cut through densely developed communities. For instance, it would bisect Easton and require 7 grade crossings, which will impact traffic and travel for residents.

\* The funds required for the train project might be better spent on other things, including more direct economic investment on the South Shore. Merely transporting some South Shore people to Boston is not a solution.

Sincerely,  
 Daniel P. Paré

**Peter L. Paull, Jr., P.C.**  
Attorney at Law  
700 Pleasant Street, Suite 540  
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740  
Telephone: 508 992-1578  
Fax: 508 992-4655  
plpjr.pc@verizon.net

By Fax

May 5, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. EOEEA  
ATTN: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I strongly support the South Coast Rail Project for the reason it will greatly reduce the unnecessary traffic congestion and delays on Route 24.

The rail will:

1. Save countless gallons of fuel.
2. Reduce pollution from cars stuck in traffic.
3. Reduce wasted man-hours of worker productivity.

Anyone who has an input on this issue should be first required to drive Route 24 to Boston during rush hour.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,



PETER L. PAULL, JR.

PLP/dmm

cc: Mr. Matthew Morrissey  
Ms. Kristina Egan, Project Director, Massachusetts Department of Transportation

F-002.01

MAY 5 '11 REG DIV



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**From:** apetitti [APETITTI@COX.NET]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 21, 2011 7:06 PM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Cc:** kristina .egan@state.ma.us; aisling.eglington@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann,

I'm writing to voice my wholehearted support for the South Coast Rail Project. With gas prices @ nearly \$4 per gallon and all the environmental issues related to producing additional power sources; commuter rail is the obvious answer. Smart growth, fully utilizing our cities' capacities, further supports our environment along with decreasing our need for gasoline, etc.

Fall River and New Bedford can be real growth centers in Massachusetts for middle income families that are priced out of the Boston real estate market. For decades these communities have sent their tax dollars to the greater Boston area as their infrastructure was neglected. Fall River and New Bedford can now add their affordable housing to the benefit of Boston. Boston will have a larger pool of workers that will now have a means to get in and out of Boston at a reasonable price and on a scheduled train versus being at the mercy of the Distress-way (I commuted for 15+ years).

E-017.01

This project has been sidetracked for far too long; now is the time to make the right decision and build commuter rail to the benefit of all of Massachusetts.

Best Regards,

Ken Petitti

**From:** Bill [bpezz@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 15, 2011 3:36 PM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Cc:** Bill  
**Subject:** Keep the trains out of Easton !!!!  
 Atten: Alan Anacheke-Nasemann

Keep the trains out of Easton !!!!

Twelve years ago I sent a letter to Mr David Durand opposing the trains going through Easton when the projected cost was 460 million dollars.  
 I was against it then, and still against it now.

I live a 1/2 mile away from the tracks and within 2 miles of 4 grade crossing. I don't want to listen to horns blasting every 15 minutes at peak hours. Nor do I want 40 to 50 trains speeding through Easton at 50 to 60 miles per hour. I know our selectwoman has proposed a "no-whistle" plan at crossings. How safe can that possibly be. I would only be a matter of time before someone gets killed. And the MBTA will tell us "sorry" statistically these things just happen.

E-036.01

I've been to several meetings and it seems to me the MBTA has a mathematical formula for everything from ridership, wetland studies, vibration studies, emission studies parking / infrastructure studies, and environmental studies. The only study they won't share with us is, what is the potential of deaths or accidents at the 46 miles of track and 37 grade crossing.

Frankly, it's not my problem how the people from New Bedford get to Boston. People in Boston and the surrounding towns can't find high paying jobs in Boston.  
 What makes you think the train is going to bring more qualified people to the downtown area ?

Cultural and Sporting events, are you serious ? The average family can't afford to spend \$300 or \$400 to get to see a play or a Red Sox game.

The project is now projected at \$1.4 to \$1.9 billion. The MBTA is current operating at billions of dollar deficit.

The train would benefit a small percentage who have jobs in Boston. The rail is not going to help the 80% of the mill town worker who need it the most.

I don't believe trains going through this town are going improve our quality of life, improve the tax rate, or increase our property value.

William Pezzella  
 South Easton, MA

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**From:** Susan Plante [skplante457@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2011 7:51 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; "aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us."  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail Project - Comments

Hello,

I am writing to vigorously oppose the South Coast Rail Project going through our town of Easton based on the deleterious impact on our drinking water, 7 crossings that jeopardize public safety, irrevocable environmental damage to the Hockomock Swamp and damage to many historical buildings in our town.

When I was working as a VNA nurse in the south shore area, I found myself spending up many extra minutes a day waiting at train crossings. Sometimes the train never came which prompted some drivers to drive through the down crossing gates. If grown-ups take such risks, I shudder to imagine how children and adolescents will respond to waiting many minutes for a train that isn't yet there.

Dividing our town will also have a serious negative impact on our fire, police and ambulance services as the majority of our town will be on the "wrong side of the tracks" when an emergency arises. Waiting at a train crossing may make the difference between life and death.

Susan K. Plante  
14 Berwick Road  
South Easton, MA 02375

E-044.01



**From:** Brian Reardon [ktmreardon@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 4:39 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** Stop the train through Easton

Attn: Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District, Regulatory 696 Virginia Road Concord, MA

Dear Alan:

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.

Feasibility – it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.

E-063.01

Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.

Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.

Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.

Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.

The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.

E-063.02

**From:** Jennifer - Peachy Pendants [bjreardon@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 4:53 PM

**To:** SC REIS, NAE

**Subject:** NO to the train through Easton

Attn: Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District, Regulatory 696 Virginia Road Concord, MA

Dear Alan:

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.

Feasibility – it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.

Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

E-064.01

Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.

Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.

Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.

Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.

The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.

E-064.02

Sincerely,

Jennifer Reardon  
9 Laurel Drive  
North Easton, MA 02356

RE: South Coast Rail Project

This letter is intended to act as notice that there are many reasons that I am completely against the Stoughton Rail Alternative. The major concern is the cost that would be associated with such a project. The Stoughton alternative is fiscally irresponsible as it increases the taxes burden for all tax payers plus increases the debt for our children and beyond. The MBTA is poorly managed now and they have been operating at a loss for many years. This will even make it worse on how they operate. I completely disagree with the ROI with this project as there is no future with such a line being established. This will also have a major effect on the environment and the town water supply in Easton.

L-081.01

The Stoughton alternative would also ruin an important historical area in Easton. North Easton is a national treasure with buildings designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and landscaping from Frederick Law Olmsted. The Ames family has been an important part of our national history with the many buildings that manufactured shovels. These shovels were supplied the United States Military and were used during World War I through the Korean War. These buildings will be affected with a rail running right next to them.

If the politicians were truly for the people, they would see a bus service makes the most common sense. A bus line is more fiscally responsible and would be easier to dissolve than a rail system if it didn't work out. Once a rail system is in place, the environment and landscape will be impacted forever.

L-081.02

Regards,

Curt Rice  
78 Kennedy Circle  
South Easton, MA 02375



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**From:** D\_Richwine@globe.com  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2011 6:47 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** testing

hi, just testing an e-mail address on southeast rail hearings.... can you hit reply if you  
got this loud and clear? thanks.

E-037.01

Dave Richwine  
Globe Zones copy desk chief  
richwi@globe.com  
617-929-2067

Kathy Romero  
439 Prospect Hill Street  
Raynham, MA 02767  
508-880-7899

May 26, 2011

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord MA 01742-2751 &

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr., EOEEA  
Attention: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02144

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this comment letter in regard to the Southcoast Rail proposal. I have lived in Raynham for 49 years, including 19 years on uplands adjacent to the Hockomock Swamp. I worked on the effort to achieve the designation of Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for the Hockomock Swamp and have worked in the field to protect endangered species and their migration routes in and around the Hockomock Swamp. I also have walked the existing "rail bed" throughout the last 19 years.

I understand that your agency considers several factors for determining a route for a potential train from Fall River/New Bedford to/from Boston. Please consider my comments.

Wetland Conditions – The Hockomock Swamp, a state-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), has been called "The Wonder Wetland" for decades. From walking the existing "rail bed" (which is an over-enthusiastic description of what is there) throughout the past 19 years, I can tell you that water flows every which way due to streams that have been disturbed and relocated in the past. At some times of the year, the bed is flooded, under water, and is impassable. I believe that the level of upgrade needed to the existing "rail bed" has been underestimated. Therefore estimates on wetland alteration and the alteration of other protected resources have been underestimated. Please require the project proponents to address this.

L-082.01

Wildlife - I volunteer to identify turtle migration routes and other wildlife projects associated with the Hockomock Swamp. It is critical that wildlife migration routes, for "ordinary" wildlife as well as for rare and endangered species, not be fragmented but remain connected. Losing that connectivity will put in jeopardy not only the animal species but years of taxpayer money and other resources that have been spent on projects to protect ordinary wildlife as well as to revitalize populations of rare and endangered species. Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife has spent a considerable amount of taxpayer money on the purchase of land and conservation restrictions associated with the Hockomock Swamp. Please do not waste those resources by fragmenting the wildlife habitat in the Hockomock Swamp.

L-082.02

Economics – A train from Fall River/New Bedford to/from Boston makes no economic sense. I take the Bloom Bus to/from Boston every day. Up until a couple of years ago, they had a run from Fall River to/from Boston. They discontinued it because of a lack of riders. About ten people (different people) would take the bus in a month – which means that people were not taking it to work in Boston. Please do not support spending my tax dollars on this train. I support using my tax dollars to employ people in Fall River and New Bedford not put them on a train to Boston where there are scarce jobs as well. Many of our tax dollars already go to support Fall River and New Bedford as these cities receive many large grants and subsidies from the state and federal government. Other riders along the proposed train route already have alternative transportation options.

L-082.03

I have lived in Raynham for 49 years. We decided to raise our family in Raynham because we like small towns. I keep reading about how regional planners cannot wait to put economic development along the train route. Please do not support destroying our small town as well as other small towns along the route. People make a choice to live in a small town rather than a big city. Our neighborhood, which is parallel to the existing “rail bed”, is located in a farm and forest zoning district with many small farms. This lifestyle should be supported and celebrated, not destroyed.

Where is the money going to come from to construct this route? Where will the money come from to maintain it? Will ridership support it? No. Ridership estimates are grossly overstated.

Private Wells – There are private drinking water wells along the train route, specifically, all along Prospect Hill Street (where we live) in Raynham. Our road dead ends in the Hockomock Swamp. There is no access to public drinking water on our street and the street is physically located in Taunton – although nowhere near another street in Taunton - so we will not be seeing public water. Trains risk polluting our private wells through spills and leaks as well as through the associated “economic development” that regional planners are eager to construct along the train route.

L-082.04

Conservation – There is nothing about this project that will conserve anything. Negative impacts to wildlife; wetlands; floodplain; and other natural resources in this ACEC, as well as to the local economies of small towns, will be devastating.

L-082.05

Any minimal benefits accrued from this proposal do not outweigh the significant environmental and economic losses, short-term and long-term, that will result from this proposal. Public agencies have a responsibility to protect the natural resources that we hold in common and to consider the economies and way of life in small towns in southeastern Massachusetts. Please stop this project. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

*Kathy Romero*

Kathy Romero



✓  
May 5, 2011

To: Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Rd, Concord, MA

L-017.01

The South Coast Rail is a very vital project for <sup>not only</sup> the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts but for the Boston area and the <sup>entire state</sup> <sub>in general</sub>.

① It will be a very convenient and environment friendly transportation for the residents connecting them to the rest of the population particularly to the north including Boston, Rt. 128 Belt area.

L-017.02

② It would be better to have an electric train system for a long term facility because it would be able to use other green sources of energy like wind or solar energy. Also it will be faster and <sup>needs</sup> less maintenance once it's built.

L-017.03

③ It would be an economic boost for the thousands of residents here. They will have access to jobs available in other areas with easy commute. Thanks

Sincerely,

Dr. T.K. Roy

216 Blackmore Pond Rd.

W. Wareham, MA 02576

Contact info:

{ troy@umassd.edu

{ 508-748-9797

MAY 10 '11 REG DIV

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**From:** Roy, Tricia [Tricia.Roy@MONEYMANAGEMENT.ORG]

**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 6:08 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** South Coast Rail Project

My husband and I are residents of Fairhaven, MA and have been following the progress of the South Coast Rail Project very closely.

We believe that the Southcoast Rail will have positive economic implications for the Greater New Bedford area. People can get and keep jobs in Boston and still live in the scenic Southcoast, where they will spend their wages in local businesses. I work in New Bedford, but frequently must travel to board meetings in Boston. My husband is a civil engineer/architect/urban planner in need of meaningful work; he's been working as a security guard in order to make ends meet. This project would present a chance for him to "give back" to our community if he can assist in its implementation. And naturally, it would be the central artery of this region, pumping new blood into a depressed area. As a financial counselor, I work with people every day that, like my husband, need an opportunity to branch out and find employment beyond the local area.

E-065.01

We support the Stoughton Alternative with electric mode to best meet the future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston. We believe, after fully reading the study, that this alternative best balances transportation and environmental benefits with environmental impacts.

E-065.02

Thank you,

Mrs. Tricia Roy  
Mr. Sameh Youssef  
7 Samoset Circle  
Fairhaven, MA 02719

**Tricia A. Roy | Branch Counselor**

Money Management International | "Improving Lives Through Financial Education"

888 Purchase St., Suite 319

New Bedford, MA 02740

D: 888-845-5669 Ext. 5831 | F: 508-999-1660

[Tricia.Roy@MoneyManagement.org](mailto:Tricia.Roy@MoneyManagement.org)

[www.moneymanagement.org](http://www.moneymanagement.org)

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**Shibli, Abdul**

**From:** Shibli, Abdul  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 20, 2011 4:42 PM  
**To:** 'ccorona@easton.ma.us'  
**Subject:** Commuter rail through Easton

Dear Colleen,

It was nice talking with you this afternoon. As I mentioned to you, I have lived in South Easton for almost 24 years and have been following the developments relating to the commuter rail project since I moved from Boston to Easton to work as a professor at Stonehill College. Before I moved to Easton in 1987, for three years I commuted to Stonehill from Boston. My wife, who graduated from Stonehill in 1990, commuted to Fall River for her job there in 1990-1991. I myself became a railroad commuter in 2000 when I started working for Harvard University and commuted until 2005 from Mansfield to Harvard Square. I now work in Boston, but drive to work! My wife, who drove to Boston College for her MSW program, would have benefitted from a commuter rail system if it were available then!

I am also currently teaching an Economics course at Framingham State University and during my lectures, emphasize the benefits of public transportation given the price of gas, traffic congestion, and global warming trends.

So, as you can imagine having a commuter rail through Easton would be good for young families like us. Even now, for me, for my kids, and also for my visitors. I have done some serious work as an environmental economist (particularly with one of Harvard's Environmental Policy programs) and understand the pro and con arguments of building a commuter rail system. I feel that given all the scrutiny this project has received over the last 20 years (if not more), the economic, environmental, and developmental benefits for Massachusetts are overwhelming. Plus, as a resident, my family and I feel that this will be very beneficial to us. My son lives in Jamaica Plain, and uses the public transportation system when available. My daughter, who went to Tufts for her undergraduate (as a resident), and is an attorney working in NYC, is an avid train rider, and will be able to come and visit us more often if she can catch a commuter train to North Easton from South Station! By the way, both attended the Public Schools in Easton.

E-016.01

I hope I have conveyed in this brief statement why I look forward to a rail connection that is economical and completed without any additional impediments. Please feel free to contact me if you need more information or to provide additional supporting materials.

Best regards,

M. Abdul Shibli

**From:** Colleen Corona [mailto:colleencorona@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 20, 2011 1:57 PM  
**To:** Shibli, Abdul  
**Subject:** Fw: call to resident Abduhl Shabli

**From:** Southworth, Mary  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 20, 2011 1:36 PM  
**To:** Colleen Corona  
**Subject:** call to resident Abduhl Shabli

5/2/2011



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**From:** James Stanton [stanton1943@msn.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 11:11 AM  
**To:** S CREIS, NAE  
**Subject:** rail

*We need rail service as soon as possible.*

| E-066.01

Date 5/24/11

Alan Anacheka-Nasemann  
Army Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751  
email: SCREIS@USACE.army.mil  
fax: 978-318-8303

Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., EOEEA  
attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston MA 02114  
email: aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
fax: 617-626-1181 or via hand delivery.

Dear Mr. Anacheka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

I oppose the Stoughton extension because I feel the state has enough resources in this area that are not be used correctly or being properly maintained. The money allowed or allocated for this project should be used to fix roads, bridges and existing transportation. Based on the low ridership on recent tracks added, this project is a complete waste of hard earned taxpayer dollars. The percentage of people that will wish to pay the price to ride into Boston and commute more than 3 hours per day can not possibly be enough reason to permanently ruin the historical landmarks, natural resources and quiet suburban communities

F-004.01

like Easton. I am greatly concerned about the damage from vibration that would be done to my house and property as I would border this track.

F-004.01

Noise, air pollution and the town water supply are also a great concern and that few or no mitigation measures are planned.

In closing, this state can not afford to waste money on ill-fated projects like this while its needed roads and infrastructure are crumbling because of lack of funds.

I strongly oppose this project.

Eric M. Stevens

Signature

Eric M. Stevens

PRINT Name

16 Bridge Street North Easton MA

Address

02356



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**From:** ssull [birdiesull@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 6:47 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us.  
**Subject:** New Bedford rail

DON'T DO IT! I spent 3 years traveling to Boston from my hometown in Lakeville. I did so on the bus from New Bedford, DATTCO because the rail was 6 dollars a day more and wasn't really any faster. I hated it, it was terrible going to Boston and sitting in that God awful traffic every day for four hours that I wasn't being paid for. I had no life because I spent my whole day working and getting to work. I NEVER went anywhere in Boston- couldn't wait to get out of there and get home. The food and entertainment are cheaper here- just as good and don't come with all the nuisance of getting in and out of Boston. I can drive my car to places, enjoy myself and be home in a flash when I'm done- not schlogging through more traffic and time getting away from there. E-067.01

**Bring jobs and businesses to our area where we can commute with the same ease as Bostonians do to their jobs.** Why should we spend all our time and money going in there and leaving our communities down here penniless and wanting always???? This whole thing is madness- and as far as the Lakeville line, it sure didn't do anything great for our area. I love going to my job in New Bedford every day- going against all the awful glut of cars heading to Boston, where my work was no better paying nor more interesting than it is right here at home. E-067.02

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**From:** Joan Sullivan [balone0419@yahoo.com]

**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2011 3:41 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** Commuter Rail Through Easton

Hello,

I wanted to put my two cents in regarding the extension of the Stoughton commuter rail line through Easton to Fall River and New Bedford. I am an Easton resident, and while I've heard all of the reasons why Easton residents don't want the train to go through the town, I haven't seen any information about why there needs to be service between Boston and New Bedford and Fall River. I'm sure some sort of studies have been done, but where are the actual figures of how many cars drive on the road from these towns to Boston every day? And of those cars, how many people have been interviewed to see if they would take a train into Boston instead? The cost of this extension is enormous, and the information I mention needs to be gathered to justify the cost. We all know the cost of the train through Hingham and how ridership is no where near what estimates said it would be. Instead of using the same type of estimates for the Stoughton line extension and spending millions and millions of dollars for a train that no one will ride, you should take a step back and see if the cost outweighs the benefit. I think it does.

E-034.01

Joan Sullivan

5/16/11

Dear Mr. ANACHEKA-NASEMANN,

My name is ALAN SWANSON , and I was born in NEW BEDFORD on MAY 24, 1961, and have resided here all of my life.

I also work at the NEW BEDFORD BUSINESS PARK.

Having stated those facts, I still very much have been looking forward to the convenience of passenger rail to my home town. I am an avid, if not rabid sports fan, and would love to ride the train to BOSTON in order to attend a BRUINS, CELTICS, OR RED SOX game, and visit the MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, or the PUBLIC GARDENS.

L-029.01

There are many more people in the area that would like to do the same.

Although we would not necessarily need the train to commute to work, it would still be very much appreciated to do so for recreation!

I attended the public comment meeting at KEITH JR. HIGH and would like to add my voice to all the others that feel that the proposed line through STOUGHTON and an electric train are most definately the best options and should be approved NOW!

We here on the so-called south coast have been left to languish for far too long!

This proposal is exactly what has been necessary ever since train service stopped back in 1959!

Perhaps you recall an older gentleman named MEDEROIS, whom chose to speak at the public comment meeting.

He stated that he is tired of N.I.M.B.Y.,s telling him what he can do without, and wondered if he would live long enough to see the passenger trains return to NEW BEDFORD and FALL RIVER.

Sir, there are a few hundred thousand of us that could not have stated those feelings any better!

In closing, PLEASE APPROVE THE STOUGHTON LINE WITH ELECTRIC TRAINS NOW WHILE WE ARE ALL STILL ALIVE!

MAY17'11 REG DIV

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,

ALAN B. SWANSON





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**From:** gtaylor@cjmanagement.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 26, 2011 8:15 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail Project DEIS USACE File # NAE-2007-00698

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

I am writing to you today to strongly oppose the Stoughton Branch Alternative to extend commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River. The area that the proposed line is going through is the most environmentally sensitive of any of the other proposals. It must be built through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC as well as the Pine Swamp with its many species of endangered animals. The disruption to their habitat during and after construction would cause great harm and permanently affect their ability to survive. There are 63 wetlands located along the Easton right-of-way according to the DEIS report. These areas are under conservation protection now from harmful development. I don't understand how we can allow this area to be compromised by a commuter rail service when there are other alternatives that are less environmentally damaging.

E-055.01

Another concern I have is the drinking water impact this service could have. Many of Easton's wells are located near the proposed rail line. A fuel spill near any of these well sites would have a devastating impact on the drinking water supply to the town. The rail line also crosses over the Canoe River Aquifer that supplies clean drinking water to many towns in Southeastern Massachusetts. We should be protecting the drinking water supplies of the area instead of introducing a potential source of destruction to this valuable resource.

E-055.02

I believe the Rapid Express Bus Service to Boston would have the least environmental impact at the least cost and still provide the benefit to the New Bedford and Fall River residents that this study addresses. Any of the alternatives, other than Stoughton Extension, would have less environmentally damaging impacts.

E-055.03

Please consider my arguments before considering the Stoughton Branch Alternative as a viable option. This option could have permanent destructive impacts on more areas of the environment than the other alternatives that have been proposed in the study.

Sincerely,  
Grant Taylor  
37 Scotch Dam Road  
Easton, MA 02375

---

**From:** v mt1235@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, May 27, 2011 4:12 PM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** NAE-2007-00698, South Coast Rail Project DEIS USACE  
Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

I am strongly against the proposed Stoughton Branch Alternative commuter Rail Service. It is my understanding Easton provides a lot of its own water via wells located in Easton. This is a fragile system and may not be able to withstand the burden of a rail line with trains going through the wetlands repeatedly. The pollution from operating a train as well as the possibility of contamination with a train derailment leave this very sensitive area at risk.

E-068.01

Could you please consider these concerns as you are evaluating this alternative.

Thank you for your time,

Victoria Taylor  
37 Scotch Dam Rd  
S. Easton, MA 02375

May 12, 2011

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Arms Corps of Engineers  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I am writing to make you aware of my strong opposition to the proposed South Coast Rail project utilizing the Stoughton route. My concerns about this project are numerous. I am a resident of Easton and if this route is selected the trains would run through my yard. My husband and I live in Easton with our two young children. Obviously, my biggest concern is with regard to safety. If the Stoughton route is utilized the train will run just feet from my house posing a significant safety concern for my children and other children in the area.

L-027.01

My concern about safety includes the children and also the many animals that live in this area. Enclosed please find a picture of what I think is a beaver home located in our woods. I have also seen rabbits, deer, turkey, a spotted salamander, rabbits, fox, cyote, turtles just to name a few. Clearly these animals will all be at risk if the train runs through this area.

In addition to safety, my second concern is that it will diminish our quality of life. My husband and I moved to Easton because we were drawn to the beautiful open spaces. We purchased a home on 5 acres of land situated between two golf courses. We are often outside enjoying the beautiful views and peaceful sounds. The sounds we typically hear are from the woodpeckers that live in the woods, other animals that live on the property and the occasional golfer on the golf course yelling "fore". This peacefulness would be replaced by the frequent sound of trains at all hours. Instead of looking out and enjoying the beauty the woods offer many of the trees would be gone replaced with train tracks and trains. We were also drawn specifically to Easton because of the history. Some of that history is also in jeopardy if the train runs through Easton.

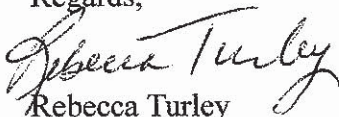
L-027.02

My third concern is regarding cost. As a taxpayer, I am concerned about the astronomical cost this project would incur. Based on the studies I have seen, the benefit does not seem to justify the cost particularly in this economy. The projected ridership seems extremely low and that was based on studies which are very outdated. Since there appears to be a trend of companies moving out of the city and more people working remotely it is my guess that those low numbers are even lower.

L-027.03

I have attended many meetings over the years regarding this project. It appears that there are much better options from a safety and cost perspective. It is my hope that you will consider one of these other alternatives for extending service. Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns regarding this project.

Regards,



Rebecca Turley  
21 Justin Drive  
South Easton, MA 02375

MAY26'11 REG DIV





May 27, 2011

Alan Anacheke-Nasemann  
Project Manager  
Army Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
Regulatory Division  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Re: CENAE-R, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, FILE NO. NAE-2007-00698

Dear Mr. Anacheke-Nasemann:

I have examined the above captioned report. In my professional opinion, the DEIR/DEIS is inadequate because it does not evaluate the project in light of all specific factors required by 33 CFR 320.4(a)(1), which states:

L-084.01

*"All factors which may be relevant to the proposal must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof: among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, **general environmental concerns**, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, **safety**, food and fiber production, mineral needs, **considerations of property ownership** and, in general, the needs and **welfare of the people**." (Emphasis Added.)*

I also find it disturbing that the DEIR/DEIS, without any explanation or justification, limits its scope to the construction stage of the project and ignores the serious environmental and public safety hazards which will emerge during the operations of the passenger and particularly freight trains.

L-084.02

Proper consequence analyses as well as past accident experience reveal that operational risks or consequences can be so high, they may alter or even dominate the ranking of the alternatives considered in this project. Yet, the current version of the DEIR/DEIS implicitly and categorically ignores these known hazards and known potential consequences.

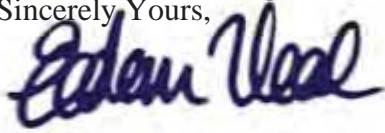
For example, accidents such as the puncture of a tank wagon by collision or derailment, and failure and mal-operation of the tank wagon equipment can lead to a catastrophic loss of containment of toxic, radioactive, polluting, flammable or combustible material such as chlorine, LPG, and even diesel fuel. Resulting spills can get into ground water, poison or burn the public, pollute the atmosphere, or create flammable clouds capable of posing flash fire, Vapor Cloud Explosion, BLEVE, blast and jet fire hazards to public and property. Transport of condensed materials such as fertilizer presents special explosion hazards similar to that of TNT or C4, especially when these materials are mixed with diesel fuel.

Before it can reasonably be deemed adequate, the report, at the least, must evaluate the consequences of the above-mentioned scenarios. It must also consider potential impacts all other scenarios and all different material releases experienced during previous incidents. For your consideration, I have attached summaries of selected accidents in the annex.

L-084.03

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Erdem Ural', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Erdem A. Ural, Ph.D.



### Annex A Compilation of Selected Accidents

**1) Crescent City, IL. On June 21, 1970**, 15 railroad cars including 9 cars carrying LPG derailed. The force of the derailment propelled one of the rail cars over the derailed cars in front of it. Its coupler then struck another rail car and punctured it. LPG was released and ignited. The resulting fireball reached a height of several hundred feet and extended into the part of the town surrounding the trains. The fire caused other rail cars to be ruptured. Portions of the ruptured rail cars rocketed away, travelling by as far as 1600 feet. The fire lasted 56 hours. At the end, 16 businesses were destroyed and 7 others were damaged. Twenty-five homes were destroyed and many others were damaged. Owing to prompt evacuation, no one died but 66 people were injured.

**2) Kingman, AZ. On July 5, 1973**, BLEVE of a single railroad tank car containing LPG occurred. One-half of the railroad tank car rocketed away by 1200 feet. At the time of the explosion, there were 13 fire fighters and 2 employees within 150 ft at the time explosion occurred. Thirteen of them died of extensive burns. Most of the 95 injured people were spectators located along the highway some 1000 ft away from the tank. The flaming debris and heat radiated from the fireball ignited structures located by as far as 900 ft.

**3) Viareggio, Italy. On June 29th, 2009** the derailment of a freight train carrying 14 LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) tank-cars near, caused a massive LPG release from a single rail car. The flashing LPG spill caused the formation of a gas cloud and a boiling pool. No loss of containment occurred from the other 13 tank wagons. A gas cloud formed and ignited triggering a flashfire that resulted in 31 fatalities and in extended damages to residential buildings around the railway line. (see Figure below)

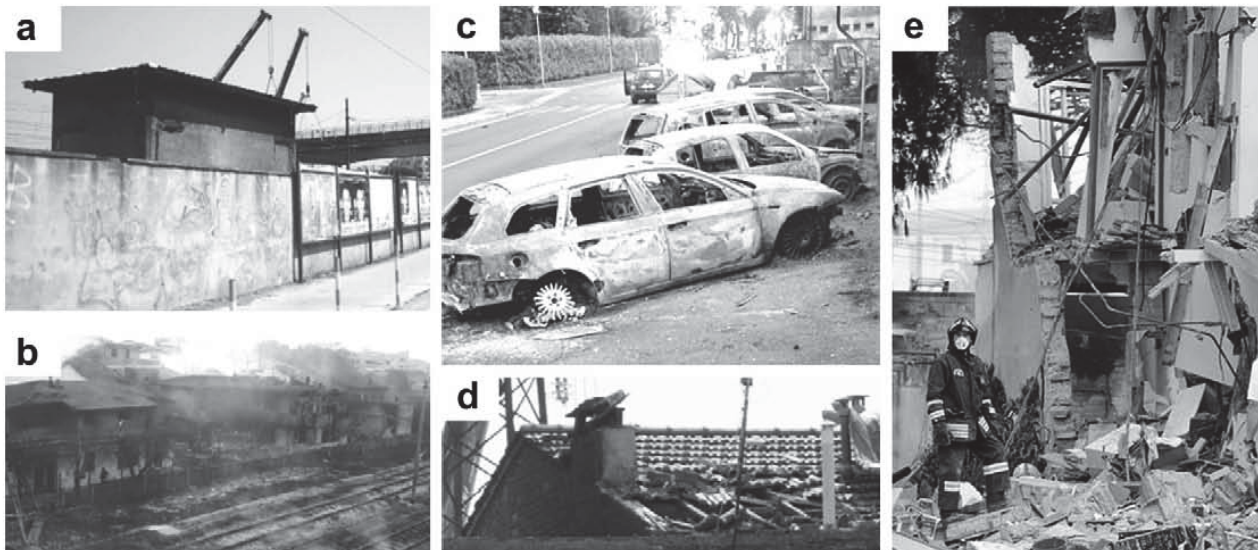


Figure. a) Continuous wall on the West side of the station; b) hedge in front of houses damaged by the fire on the East side of the station; c) example of severe damages to vehicles;

*d) example of damages due to thermal stresses caused by the fire exposure; e) example of damages due to internal overpressure (Landucci et al., 2010).*

**4) On Saturday, May 27, 2000**, about 11:48 a.m., central daylight time, 33 of the 113 cars making up eastbound Union Pacific Railroad train QFPLI-26 derailed near Eunice, Louisiana. Of the derailed cars, 15 contained hazardous materials and 2 contained hazardous materials residue. The derailment resulted in a release of hazardous materials with explosions and fire. About 3,500 people were evacuated from the surrounding area, which included some of the business area of Eunice. No one was injured during the derailment of the train or the subsequent release of hazardous materials. Total damages exceeded \$35 million.

**5) On Wednesday, October 10, 2007**, about 12:02 p.m., eastbound CSX Transportation (CSX) freight train Q380-09 derailed 31 cars in Painesville, Ohio, while being operated on main track 1. The train was traveling 48 mph at the time of the derailment. The crew's last train operation had been made about 1 1/2 miles before the derailment. The train consisted of 2 locomotives and 112 cars (106 loaded and 6 empty). The 31st through 61st cars in the train derailed. The derailed cars included seven tank cars carrying ethanol, one tank car carrying liquefied petroleum gas, and one tank car carrying phthalic anhydride. Also among the 31 cars that derailed were covered hoppers carrying corn, wheat, feed, plastic, and lumber. The ethanol tank cars and many of the other freight cars caught on fire. Twenty-six of the derailed cars were destroyed. (See figure 1.)

As a precaution, about 1,400 area residents were evacuated from an area of approximately 3 square miles. There were no reported injuries. The temperature at the time of derailment was 51° F, and it was daylight. Estimated damages and environmental cleanup costs were \$8.48 million. At 10:00 a.m., about 2 hours before the accident, the engineer and conductor had gone on duty at CSX's Collinwood Yard in Cleveland, Ohio, to relieve the inbound crew of the train. The crew received new train documentation and the current dispatcher bulletin. The engineer performed the required air brake test, contacted the train dispatcher for permission to depart, and departed at 11:28 a.m.

**6) About 10:41 p.m. eastern daylight time on Friday, October 20, 2006**, Norfolk Southern Railway Company train 68QB119, en route from the Chicago, Illinois, area to Sewaren, New Jersey, derailed while crossing the Beaver River railroad bridge in New Brighton, Pennsylvania. The train consisted of a three-unit locomotive pulling 3 empty freight cars followed by 83 tank cars loaded with denatured ethanol, a flammable liquid. Twenty-three of the tank cars derailed near the east end of the bridge, with several of the cars falling into the Beaver River. Of the 23 derailed tank cars, about 20 released ethanol, which subsequently ignited and burned for about 48 hours. Some of the unburned ethanol liquid was released into the river and the surrounding soil. Homes and businesses within a seven-block area of New Brighton and in an area adjacent to the accident were evacuated for 2 days. No injuries or fatalities resulted from the accident. The Norfolk Southern Railway Company estimated total damages to be \$5.8 million.

**7) On Sunday, July 10, 2005**, about 4:15 a.m., central daylight time, two CN freight trains collided head on in Anding, Mississippi. The collision occurred on the CN Yazoo Subdivision, where the trains were being operated under a centralized traffic control signal system on single track. Signal data indicated that the northbound train, IC 1013 North, continued past a stop (red)

signal at North Anding and collided with the southbound train, IC 1023 South, about 1/4 mile beyond the signal. The collision resulted in the derailment of 6 locomotives and 17 cars. About 15,000 gallons of diesel fuel were released from the locomotives and resulted in a fire that burned for about 15 hours. Two crewmembers were on each train; all four were killed. As a precaution, about 100 Anding residents were evacuated; they did not report any injuries. Property damages exceeded \$9.5 million; clearing and environmental cleanup costs totaled about \$616,800.

**8) At 4:56 a.m., central daylight time, on October 15, 2005,** westbound Union Pacific Railroad (UP) train ZYCLD 13 2 collided with the rear of standing UP train MPBHG 15 in the UP rail yard in Texarkana, Arkansas. The collision resulted in the puncture of a railroad tank car containing propylene, a compressed flammable gas. The propylene was heavier than air and flowed near the ground into a nearby neighborhood. The flowing gas reached a house where an unknown ignition source ignited the gas, and the house exploded. The single occupant was killed. The fire moved quickly along the flowing gas back to the punctured tank car. A second, unoccupied, home was destroyed in the fire, and a wooden railroad trestle burned completely. Approximately 3,000 residents within a 1-mile radius of the punctured tank car were advised to evacuate the area. The two crews and the employees working at the Texarkana yard were not injured, and they evacuated the area safely. Between 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., the wind was calm, the visibility was 10 miles, and the temperature was approximately 59° F. Total damage was \$2.4 million, including \$325,975 in equipment damage and \$2,053,198 in track damage.

**9) About 5:03 a.m., central daylight time, on Monday, June 28, 2004,** a westbound Union Pacific Railroad (UP) freight train traveling on the same main line track as an eastbound BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) freight train struck the midpoint of the 123-car BNSF train as the eastbound train was leaving the main line to enter a parallel siding. The accident occurred at the west end of the rail siding at Macdona, Texas, on the UP's San Antonio Service Unit. The collision derailed the 4 locomotive units and the first 19 cars of the UP train as well as 17 cars of the BNSF train. As a result of the derailment and pileup of railcars, the 16th car of the UP train, a pressure tank car loaded with liquefied chlorine, was punctured. Chlorine escaping from the punctured car immediately vaporized into a cloud of chlorine gas that engulfed the accident area to a radius of at least 700 feet before drifting away from the site. Three persons, including the conductor of the UP train and two local residents, died as a result of chlorine gas inhalation. The UP train engineer, 23 civilians, and 6 emergency responders were treated for respiratory distress or other injuries related to the collision and derailment. Damages to rolling stock, track, and signal equipment were estimated at \$5.7 million, with environmental cleanup costs estimated at \$150,000.

**10) About 2:39 a.m. eastern standard time on January 6, 2005,** northbound Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NS) freight train 192, while traveling about 47 mph through Graniteville, South Carolina, encountered an improperly lined switch that diverted the train from the main line onto an industry track, where it struck an unoccupied, parked train (NS train P22). The collision derailed both locomotives and 16 of the 42 freight cars of train 192, as well as the locomotive and 1 of the 2 cars of train P22. Among the derailed cars from train 192 were three tank cars containing chlorine, one of which was breached, releasing chlorine gas. The train engineer and eight other people died as a result of chlorine gas inhalation. About 554 people complaining of



respiratory difficulties were taken to local hospitals. Of these, 75 were admitted for treatment. Because of the chlorine release, about 5,400 people within a 1-mile radius of the derailment site were evacuated for several days. Total damages exceeded \$6.9 million.

**11) On September 21, 2004, about 3:25 a.m.,** central daylight time, the Alton and Southern Railway Company 2 remote control train YAS313 derailed during switching operations at the east end of the Gateway Hump Yard in East St. Louis, Illinois. The remote control operator was unable to control the speed of the train as it crested the hump. 3 As the train entered track 066, it collided at 9.6 mph with a tank car containing vinyl acetate. During the collision and subsequent derailment, vinyl acetate began to leak from two tank cars and the cargo from both cars caught on fire.

About 140 people from the surrounding neighborhood were evacuated, and work at the hump yard was suspended. The evacuation order was lifted about 6:00 a.m. No injuries were reported. The weather was clear, about 67° Fahrenheit, with light winds from the south-southeast. It was dark at the time of the accident, but the area was well lit with stadium type lighting.

**12) About 9:04 a.m. central standard time on February 9, 2003,** northbound Canadian National freight train M33371, traveling about 40 mph, derailed 22 of its 108 cars in Tamaroa, Illinois. Four of the derailed cars released methanol, and the methanol from two of these four cars fueled a fire. Other derailed cars contained phosphoric acid, hydrochloric acid, formaldehyde, and vinyl chloride. Two cars containing hydrochloric acid, one car containing formaldehyde, and one car containing vinyl chloride released product but were not involved in the fire. About 850 residents were evacuated from the area within a 3-mile radius of the derailment, which included the entire village of Tamaroa. No one was injured during the derailment, although one contract employee was injured during cleanup activities. Damages to track, signals, and equipment, and clearing costs associated with the accident totaled about \$1.9 million.

**13) About 9:30 a.m. central daylight time on September 13, 2002,** a 24,000-gallon-capacity railroad tank car, DBCX 9804, containing about 6,500 gallons of hazardous waste, catastrophically ruptured at a transfer station at the BASF Corporation chemical facility in Freeport, Texas. The tank car had been steam-heated to permit the transfer of the waste to a highway cargo tank for subsequent disposal. The waste was a combination of cyclohexanone oxime, water, and cyclohexanone. As a result of the accident, 28 people received minor injuries, and residents living within 1 mile of the accident site had to shelter in place for 5 1/2 hours. The tank car, highway cargo tank, and transfer station were destroyed. The force of the explosion propelled a 300-pound tank car dome housing about 1/3 mile away from the tank car. Two storage tanks near the transfer station were damaged; they released about 660 gallons of the hazardous material oleum (fuming sulfuric acid and sulfur trioxide).

**14) At approximately 1:37 a.m. on January 18, 2002,** eastbound Canadian Pacific Railway freight train 292-16, traveling about 41 mph, derailed 31 of its 112 cars about 1/2 mile west of the city limits of Minot, North Dakota. Five tank cars carrying anhydrous ammonia, a liquefied compressed gas, catastrophically ruptured, and a vapor plume covered the derailment site and surrounding area. The conductor and engineer were taken to the hospital for observation after they complained of breathing difficulties. About 11,600 people occupied the area affected by the

vapor plume. One resident was fatally injured, and 60 to 65 residents of the neighborhood nearest the derailment site were rescued. As a result of the accident, 11 people sustained serious injuries, and 322 people, including the 2 train crewmembers, sustained minor injuries. Damages exceeded \$2 million, and more than \$8 million has been spent for environmental remediation.

**15) About 3:45 a.m., eastern daylight time, on July 14, 2001,** at the ATOFINA Chemicals, Inc., (ATOFINA) plant in Riverview, Michigan, a pipe attached to a fitting on the unloading line of a railroad tank car fractured and separated, causing the release of methyl mercaptan, a poisonous and flammable gas. About 4:09 a.m., shortly after the Riverview Fire Department chief arrived on scene, the methyl mercaptan ignited, engulfing the tank car in flames and sending a fireball about 200 feet into the air. Fire damage to cargo transfer hoses on an adjacent tank car resulted in the release of chlorine, a poisonous gas that is also an oxidizer. The fire was extinguished about 9:30 a.m. Three plant employees were killed in the accident. There were several other injuries; most of the injured were treated for respiratory symptoms and released. About 2,000 residents were evacuated from their homes for about 10 hours. Two tank cars, railroad track, and plant equipment (including hoses and fittings) were damaged in the fire.

**16) On Saturday, May 27, 2000,** about 11:48 a.m., central daylight time, 33 of the 113 cars making up eastbound Union Pacific Railroad train QFPLI-26 derailed near Eunice, Louisiana. Of the derailed cars, 15 contained hazardous materials and 2 contained hazardous materials residue. The derailment resulted in a release of hazardous materials with explosions and fire. About 3,500 people were evacuated from the surrounding area, which included some of the business area of Eunice. No one was injured during the derailment of the train or the subsequent release of hazardous materials. Total damages exceeded \$35 million.

**17) About 12:05a.m. on February 18, 1999,** railroad tank car UTLX643593, which was on the west unloading rack at the Essroc Cement Corporation (Essroc) Logansport cement plant near Clymers, Indiana, sustained a sudden and catastrophic rupture that propelled the tank of the tank car an estimated 750 feet and over multistory storage tanks. The 20,000-gallon tank car initially contained about 161,700 pounds (14,185 gallons) of a toxic and flammable hazardous waste that was used as a fuel for the plant's kilns. There were no injuries or fatalities. Total damages, including property damage and costs from lost production, were estimated at nearly \$8.2million.

**18) About 6:10 a.m., central daylight time, on September 2, 1998,** the 17th through 19th cars and the first two platforms of the five-platform 20th car of westbound Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company intermodal freight train S-CHILAC1-31 derailed at Crisfield, Kansas. The accident occurred when the 18th car from the locomotive, DTTX 72318, an articulated, five-platform, 125-ton double-stack car, experienced a separation between the floor shear plate and bulkhead bottom angle at the leading end of the car's B platform. The separation allowed the car to sag below the rails, catch a part of a switch, and derail.

The train was traveling 68 mph through the east siding switch at Crisfield, milepost 291.7, on the Panhandle Subdivision of the railroad's Amarillo Division, when it began to derail. The train then went into emergency braking and stopped after traveling about 1/2 mile. The derailment resulted in a pileup involving four articulated multiplatform cars carrying intermodal shipping containers. Some of the containers were breached, resulting in the release of hazardous materials

and fires. About 200 people were evacuated within a 5-mile radius. No injuries resulted from either the derailment or the hazardous materials releases. Estimated damage was \$1.3 million.

**19) About 12:37 p.m. eastern daylight time on Saturday, June 20, 1998**, 30 of the 148 cars making up eastbound CSX Transportation, Inc., (CSX) train Q316 derailed at Cox Landing, West Virginia. Of the derailed cars, three were loaded with hazardous material, and eight others contained hazardous material residue. Two of the loaded cars were damaged in the pileup and leaked a combined volume of about 21,500 gallons of formaldehyde solution. No one was injured during the derailment of the train; however, 15 persons reported minor injuries as a result of the release of formaldehyde. Total damages in the accident exceeded \$2.6 million.

**20) At 4:30 a.m., on April 2, 1997**, tank car ACAX 80010 arrived at the Illinois Central Railroad yard in Memphis, Tennessee, on Illinois Central train No. GEME 01. At 12:05 p.m., a railroad inspector noticed leakage from the tank car during switching operations. The tank car was filled with anhydrous hydrogen fluoride, a corrosive and poisonous liquid. Vapor appeared to be leaking from a weld at a 2- by 3-foot patch in the tank wall. About 150 people (26 residences) were evacuated from a ½-mile radius around the yard for about 17 hours while the leak was controlled and the material was transferred to another tank car. No injuries were reported.

The tank car had been loaded at Allied-Signal, Inc., (the tank car owner and shipper) in Geismar, Louisiana, on March 17, 1997, and shipped on March 31, 1997, destined for Cameco in Port Hope, Ontario, Canada. The tank car had been removed from service for repairs in February 1997; the repairs included cutting out a 2- by 3-foot section of the tank wall and welding a patch into the wall. This shipment was the tank car's first after being returned to service.

**21) On February 21, 1996** at about 5:55 a.m., mountain standard time, Southern Pacific Lines freight train 1ASRVM-18 derailed 39 cars and 2 locomotives while descending the Tennessee Pass, a 3.0 percent grade in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. The train's three-member traincrew consisted of a locomotive engineer, a student locomotive engineer, and a conductor. According to the conductor, the train was being operated by the student engineer. As the train started the mountainous descent it began gaining speed and eventually ran away. The runaway train broke apart three different times, resulting in three separate derailments.

The derailment resulted in the death of both engineers. The conductor, who was in the second locomotive unit during the runaway, survived with serious injuries. As a result of the derailment 51,606 gallons of sulfuric acid and 19,733 gallons of triethylene glycol, both regulated hazardous materials, were released. Four family members living on a nearby farm were evacuated from the area. Monetary damage was estimated to be \$6.8 million.

**22) About 4:10 a.m., mountain daylight time, on April 11, 1996**, 19 cars from Montana Rail Link (MRL) freight train 01-196-10 derailed near Alberton, Montana. Six of the derailed cars contained hazardous materials. One derailed tank car containing chlorine (a poison gas) ruptured, releasing 130,000 pounds of chlorine into the atmosphere; another tank car containing potassium hydroxide solution (potassium cresylate, a corrosive liquid) lost 17,000 gallons of product; and a covered hopper car containing sodium chlorate (an oxidizer) spilled 85 dry gallons onto the ground.



About 1,000 people from the surrounding area were evacuated. Approximately 350 people were treated for chlorine inhalation, 123 of whom sustained injury. Nine people, including both members of the train crew, were hospitalized. A transient riding the train died from acute chlorine toxicity.

U.S. Interstate Highway 90 (I-90) is roughly parallel and about 150 yards north of the MRL tracks at the accident site. The hazardous material cloud drifted across I-90 resulting in multiple highway traffic accidents. Several motorists were stranded in the cloud after these accidents. I-90 was closed following the accident requiring an 81-mile detour. Monetary damage was estimated to be \$3.9 million.

The Governor of Montana declared a state of emergency in Missoula and Mineral County. On April 14, 1996 the evacuation area was reduced to 15 square miles; the residents were temporarily escorted into the area to feed and water livestock animals, retrieve some personal possessions, and locate pets. Residents were allowed to return to their homes, and I-90 was reopened 17 days after the accident.

**23) About 5:00 a.m. eastern standard time on February 7, 1996,** in Sweetwater, Tennessee, Norfolk Southern eastbound train M34T5 stopped on the main track to allow a westbound train to pull onto a siding. About 5:30 a.m., as the engineer began to move his train forward, an uncommanded emergency brake application occurred. The train had moved about 33 feet and reached a speed of about two mph. When the train conductor walked back to determine the cause of the emergency brake application, he discovered that tank car GATX 92414 had separated almost completely into two halves near the middle of the tank and that about 8,000 gallons of carbon disulfide, a flammable and toxic material, had spilled. As a result of the spill, about 500 people were evacuated from the area, including residents of a nursing home. Five people were seen at a local hospital, but only one person was admitted.

About noon on February 9, 1996, emergency crews determined that the released carbon disulfide did not pose a problem outside the immediate area of the tank car, and the evacuation order was lifted. The Sweetwater Fire Department then relinquished control of the site to the Environmental Protection Agency on-scene coordinator (EPA OSC), and the focus of the activities at the site became environmental cleanup and product recovery.

About 4:45 p.m. on February 9, the EPA OSC decided to permit access to the tank car to examine the fracture surfaces before the tank was moved. Initially, polyethylene tarpaulins and plywood were placed over the spill area near the failed tank car. However, at 10:00 p.m., after discussions with the chemical shipper, Akzo Nobel Chemicals, Inc., the EPA OSC became concerned that the polyethylene tarpaulin and plywood could trap pockets of carbon disulfide vapors, which could possibly be ignited by people walking over the tarpaulin.

At 1:40 a.m. on February 10, as Norfolk Southern contractor personnel were attempting to remove the tarpaulin, a flash fire occurred. Four contractor personnel were caught in the flash fire, but because the fire was of short duration and the flames were low to the ground, no injuries resulted. Sweetwater emergency response agencies were not on scene at the time, but the Sweetwater fire chief resumed control of the site shortly after this fire and initiated a second area-wide evacuation. On February 12, following cleanup activities at the site, this evacuation was lifted.

**24) At 3:55 p.m. on October 23, 1995,** at the Gaylord Chemical Corporation plant in Bogalusa, Louisiana, yellow-brown vapors began leaking from the dome of the DOT class 105A railroad

tank car UTLX 82329 that contained a mixture of nitrogen tetroxide, which is a liquefied poisonous gas and oxidizer, and water. The vapors initially formed a plume between 10 and 15 feet in diameter. Plant personnel notified emergency response agencies and used two plant fire hoses to spray water into the plume to suppress the vapors. About 4:30 p.m. Bogalusa fire personnel arrived at the plant and set up fire hoses to help-suppress the vapors.

The head on the B-end of the tank car failed about 4:45 p.m., resulting in one end of the tank car jacket being torn away and thrown about 350 feet. The tank car was then propelled 35 feet down the track and derailed at a track bumping block. A large reddish-brown vapor cloud was released from the tank car. Vapors continued to be released from the opening in the tank car for another 36 hours until the chemical reaction that had occurred within the tank was brought under control through neutralization and dilution.

Some 3,000 people were evacuated from the area as a result of the vapor cloud. Of 4,710 people who were treated at local hospitals, 81 people were admitted.

## **25) Freight Train Derailment and Puncture of Hazardous Materials Tank Cars, Crestview, Florida, April 8, 1979**

About 8 AM on April 8, 1979, 26 placarded cars (of 29 car train) containing hazardous materials, of Louisville and Nashville Railroad Co freight train derailed while moving around a curve between Milligan and Crestview, Florida. Two tank cars of anhydrous ammonia ruptured and rocketed. Twelve other cars containing acetone, methyl alcohol, chlorine, carbolic acid and anhydrous ammonia ruptured and burned. 14 persons injured, 4,500 persons evacuated. Released chlorine and anhydrous ammonia formed a cloud that threatened a 300-square mile area.

The train consisted of 5 locomotives and 114 cars (107 loaded, 6 empty and a caboose), including 67 cars containing hazardous materials. Total trailing weight, 11,360 tons.

Train separated between 36th and 37th cars and several cars had derailed. Tank cars were lying in line along outside of curve. A fire had started in tank cars jackknifed along tracks. About 8:03 AM the 59th car exploded, releasing a gas cloud and propelling a part of the car eastward. One portion of the tank car rocketed east 650 feet; one portion west 250 feet. The 56th car containing anhydrous ammonia derailed, rolled over and dislodged its dome housing cover. Its relief valves were damaged and the tank car stopped upside down on top of its relief vent. One end pointing up and the lower end engulfed in a ground spill of acetone and methyl alcohol released from other ruptured cars. Train embankment where flammable materials pooled. About 8:23 AM the 56th car exploded. Derailed cars 48 through 55 were engulfed in a bright yellow-orange fire, which continued to burn for about 60 hours, consuming the acetone, methyl alcohol and carbon tetrachloride. All the breached cars contained residues which slowly vented in the wreck area for 5 days. Phosgene gas wafted from carbon tet car. 17 derailed cars had a capacity of 33,500 gallons. Extensive fire damage within 130-foot radius of derailed and burning cars. All trees and ground cover extending for 650 feet northwest of the derailment site were defoliated by the ammonia cloud.

Despite the use of self-contained breathing apparatus and short work shifts, 10 wreckclearing workers were overcome with fumes. Some were hospitalized. Sheriff and civil defense personnel evacuated several hundred people in the Town of Milligan and a 1-square mile area to the west of the derailment. When vapor cloud rose over 200 feet and began moving westward, evacuation area was extended 4.5 miles to the Town of Baker and involved over 1,500 residents. Information about the cloud observed by Air Force

AC 130 aircraft. By 11:30 AM, evacuation area extended to include the entire northwest quarter of Oakloosa County, over 300 square miles and more than 4,500 residents. By noon the cloud extended 28 miles northward to the Florida/Alabama state line. During the next day the fire began to subside and the vapor cloud reduced to a height of 1,000 feet. The evacuation area was reduced from 13 miles to 4 miles downwind. Residents in the outward evacuation area were allowed to return home by 7 AM on April 10. By 4:15 AM on April 11, the tank car fires had burned out between April 12 and 16, all hazardous materials transferred. On April 13 all residents were allowed to return home.

## **26) Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Company Freight Train Derailment, Hazardous Material Release and Evacuation, Muldraugh, Kentucky, July 26, 1980**

About 758 AM on July 26, 1980, 4 locomotive units and 17 cars (38 trailing cars total), including 7 placarded tank cars containing hazardous materials were in Muldraugh, Kentucky. Two tanks cars of vinyl chloride were punctured and their contents burned. About 6,500 persons were evacuated from Muldraugh and the US Army installation at Fort Knox.

All the locomotive units derailed and overturned. The following 17 cars derailed. 7 tank cars contained hazardous materials. Six contained vinyl chloride and one contained chlorine. Gas escaped and ignited.

Shortly after the derailment, crewmembers informed the Muldraugh police and Fort Knox military personnel. 6,500 persons were evacuated, including 4,000 military personnel. At about 8:25 AM, KY Division of Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) was called in by local authorities to implement an emergency response plan. A temporary command post with DES in charge was established about 3/4 mile from the site and was later moved to a bldg at Fort Knox. Three highways and the air space (3 mile radius, 10,000 foot ceiling) was closed to air traffic. The evacuation area was reduced from 2 miles to 1 1/4 miles. The US Army provided assistance throughout the emergency.

## **27) Derailment of Southern Pacific Transportation Train Carrying Radioactive Material at Thermal, California, January 7, 1982.**

About 9:50 PM on January 7, 1982, Southern Pacific Transportation Co freight train No. 01-BSMFF-05, derailed 14 cars at Thermal, California. Presence of radioactive material in the derailed Trailer-On-Flat-Car train discovered about 1 hour after the accident occurred. Accurate info regarding the precise nature of the radioactive material shipment not available at the accident site until 5 hours after the derailment. The radioactive placards were located about 5:00 AM. The truck trailer, on car 48, carrying americium was destroyed and their lading was badly damaged. The Ram consisted of 16 Ci of Am-241 and Be in mixture to be utilized in oil well exploration. The container consisted of a welded mild steel closed cylinder, about 20 inches long and 17 inches in diameter. An inner 2 inch diameter stainless steel tube contained a pressure vessel, The interior void was filled with polyethylene, a neutron absorber. Gross weight was 155 lb. The outer container had no damage.

Four transients on the deck of the flat cars were injured, and one died.

## **28) Derailment of Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Freight Train and Release of Hazardous Materials at Livingston, Louisiana, September 28, 1982**

About 5:12 AM on September 28, 1982, Illinois Central Gulf Railroad (ICG) freight



train extra 9629 East derailed 43 cars ( a total of 84 loaded cars and 16 empties plus a caboose) on the single line main track in Livingston, Louisiana. Of the derailed cars, 36 were tank

cars, 27 of these containing toxic or hazardous commodities and 5 contained flammable petroleum products. A total of 20 tank cars were punctured or breached in the derailment. Fires broke out in the wreckage. Thermally-induced explosions of two tank cars that had not been punctured caused them to rocket violently. About 3000 persons living within a 5-mile radius of the derailment site were evacuated for as long as two weeks. 19 residences and other buildings in Livingston were destroyed or severely damaged. More than 200,000 gallons of toxic chemical product were spilled, requiring extensive excavation of contaminated soil and its transportation to a distant dump site. This has resulted in long-term closure of the railroad line and an adjacent highway. Apparently the engineer was drunk and an unqualified person was at the controls.

The 16th through the 58th head cars had derailed along the main track for a distance of 750 ft at milepost 26.8 The 26th through 32nd car were tank cars with vinyl chloride, a flammable gas. Two were breached in the derailment, creating the fireball which extended 400 ft from the south margin of Hwy 190 across the derailment site to 250 ft north of the track, enveloping a brick house. The

Louisiana State Police undertook the coordination of the response and evacuated 2,700 persons within a 5-mile radius. 75 tank cars, 7 of which were empty. A total of 55 tank cars were placarded as follows:

Placard	Derailed	Not Derailed
Chlorine	0	1
Flammable Gas	8	6
Flammable Liquid	1	6
Flammable Solid	1	0
Poison	4	1
Corrosive	14	14

A fire ball ignited oil leaking from the 22nd and 23rd cars. Vinyl chloride gas venting from the 30th and 31st cars burned as well as styrene monomer and toluene diisocyanate leaking from the 52nd and 54th cars. The fires fed by vinyl chloride and plastic pellets pressurized the 27,28 and 32 cars which began to vent and bum. The fire became so intense that the 36th car, loaded with motor fuel anti-knock compound, exploded about 19 hours after the derailment, propelled into the pine grove north of the derailment. A second explosion occurred 82 hours following the derailment. The south tank head of the 29th car, loaded with vinyl chloride, was propelled 225 feet south. Most of the tank rocketed 425 feet north. Airborne fragments set fire to a 55-foot mobile home 500 feet south of the derailment site. Other parts traveled as far as 1,500 feet south.

On October 4, concern over the stability of burning styrene monomer prompted emergency personnel to extinguish the fire and demolish the car with explosive charges the next day. On October 11, 6 vinyl chloride cars were detonated. In all, 36 cars were destroyed. The car chemical products lost:

Commodity	Gallons
Vinyl chloride	163043
Styrene monomer	23145

Motor tiel anti-knock compound	5666
Toluene diisocyanate	2259
Phosphoric acid	148552
hydrofluosilicic acid	19780
Sodium hydroxide	15363
Perchloroethylene	14028
ethylene glycol	20840

Most of the chemicals not burned were captured from catch basins and diked drainage ditches. More than 100 truckloads of recovered and neutralized chemicals were transported to designated dump sites. More than 60,000 cubic yards of soil were toxically contaminated and trucked 150 miles to a dump site. Extensive scorching of trees, etc within a 1000 foot radius of the derailment.

### **29) Vinyl Chloride Monomer Release from a Railroad Tank Car and Fire, Formosa Plastics Corporation Plant, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, July 30,1983**

At 3:45 AM on July 30, 1983, vinyl chloride monomer under pressure escaped from a railroad tank car at the loading facility within the Formosa Plastics Corp manufacturing plant. The released VCM was ignited and a large billowing fire ensued. VCM is a flammable compressed gas, easily ignitable, producing hazardous combustible gases composed of hydrogen chloride and carbon monoxide. The tank car had a capacity of 24,859 gallons and a fully loaded weight of 90 tons. One fire burned for 120 hours.

### **30) Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company Train Yard Accident Involving Punctured Tank Car, Nitric Acid and Vapor Cloud and Evacuation, Denver, Colorado, April 3,1983**

About 4AM on April 3, 1983, a Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Company switch crew was switching 17 cars in the North Yard in Denver, Colorado when a coupler broke on the fourth car, leading to a 150 foot separation between the 3rd and 4th car. The engineer accelerated and plowed into a loaded car ahead at a speed of 10-12 mph. Upon impact, the end sill of the fourth car, an empty box car, over-rode the coupler of the loaded tank car and punctured the tank head. Nitric acid spilled from the car, formed a vapor cloud which dispersed over the area. As a result, 34 persons were injured and 9,000 persons were evacuated from the area. The fire department arrived at 4:12 AM. But at 4:23 AM, the Denver Hazardous Materials Coordinating Chief arrived on the scene and called off the firefighters. They withdrew to a safe distance -1200 feet. Seven cars of soda ash were located, 780 tons and arrived at 11 AM. A snow blower spread the soda ash, and it took about 1 1/2 hours. The coupler between the loosened cars had failed completely.

### **31) Derailment of St Louis Southwestern Railway Company (Cotton Belt) Freight Train and Release of Hazardous Materials Near Pine Bluff, Arkansas, June 9,1985**

About 1:33 PM on June 9, 1985, St Louis Southwestern Railway Company freight train extra 4835 north derailed while passing over a ballast deck pile trestle located about 3.3 mi southwest of Pine Bluff, Arkansas. 18 of the 42 derailed cam were loaded tank cars

and 14 of these contained regulated hazardous or toxic chemical commodities; 4 others contained non-regulated flammable petroleum. Fire broke out in the wreckage; two tank cars subjected to intense thermal exposure exploded. More than 2800 persons were evacuated from a 1-mile radius.

Fire broke out immediately in the wreckage of 31 cars south of the bridge. Two tanks cars containing butyl acrylate, a combustible liquid, rupture and ignited. Burning liquid engulfed an insulated tank car loaded with liquid synthetic plastic and an insulated car containing ethylene oxide, a flammable liquid. Two derailed cars contained vinyl chloride and two tanks cars contained hydrogen fluoride anhydrous, a dangerous corrosive chemical.

The first fire crews were on the scene at 1:39 PM, 6 minutes after the accident. The conductor gave details of tank contents and instructions to the asst fire chief. For ethylene oxide, the recommended evacuation zone was 5000 foot radius. Rather than fight the fire, an estimated 2,840 persons were evacuated.

Initially the fire was caused by liquid butyl acrylate released from two punctured tank cars, but it spread rapidly to pelletized synthetic plastic that was spilled from four covered hopper cars, two of which were on top of the still intact ethylene oxide car. The car exploded at 6:40 AM on June 10, 17 hours after the accident occurred. A torch fire burned a large hole in one of the derailed tank cars containing liquid synthetic plastic (polyethylene polyphylisocyanate). This car burned and another filled with the same material exploded about 4:30 AM on June 11. After this, the fire diminished and unmanned fire hoses were set up by the fire department. The emergency was removed at 2:12 PM on June 15.

### **32) Collision and Derailment of Montana Rail Link Freight Train with Locomotive Units and Hazardous Materials Release, Helena, Montana, February 2, 1989**

About 4:30 AM on February 2, 1989, freight cars from, Montana Rail Link west bound train 1-121-28 rolled eastward down a mountain grade and struck a stopped helper locomotive. Train 121:3 helper units, 3 road units, 49 car train. 15 cars derailed including 3 tank cars containing hydrogen peroxide, isopropyl alcohol and acetone. Hazardous material released resulted in a fire and explosions. About 3,500 persons in Helena were evacuated. The locomotiveless cars and helper unit 1 collided. 21 cars involved and 15 derailed Engineer saw three tank cars, one was venting a whitish gray cloud. No flames sighted.

At 4:40 yard clerk saw orange glow. Clear liquid flowing in trackside ditch westward towards Benton Ave. Saw flames 2 feet high. First explosion occurred 3 to 4 seconds later. A second explosion occurred 1 to 2 seconds later. Flames 100 feet in the air. Second explosion was blue-white flash and loud noise. The crew of 121 was still traveling down the mountain and saw the explosion about 1 mile away.

On February 2, the mayor declared a local disaster and ordered an evacuation beginning 5:30. The initial evacuation was more than 1/2 mile radius, later reduced. By 10 on February 4, the evacuation was ended. About 3,500 people were involved. Extensive damage to a college dormitory. Damage to homes within 3 mile radius of accident, including homes penetrated with fragments weighing several hundred pounds. Carroll College reported major damage to 10 buildings.

All the hydrogen peroxide (18,950 gallons) and all the isopropyl alcohol were released.



38% of the hydrogen peroxide (7,300 gallons) in another tank car released. A mixture of hydrogen peroxide and molten polyethylene could explode. Estimated force of second explosion equivalent to 10 tons of TNT (**interaction between 9.1 tons of 70% hydrogen peroxide and 0.9 tons of polyethylene.**

**33) Burlington Northern Inc Monomethylamine Nitrate Explosion, Wenatchee, Washington, August 6, 1974**

At 12:32 PM on August 6, 1974, a shipment of Monomethylamine Nitrate solution detonated during routine switching operations in the BN Apple Yard in Wenatchee, Washington. The explosion killed two persons, injured 113 and destroyed equipment and buildings. On July 29, about 10,000 gallons of PRM was shipped by DuPont, Biwabik, MN to DuPont, Wash. The tank car arrived, after several stops, in Wenatchee at 6:55 AM on August 6, 1974. The shipment was involved in switching operations when it began to spew smoke and fire then detonated.

Apple Yard lies on the west bank of the Columbia River, south of Wenatchee. The T was 82°F. At the time there were nine cars adjacent to the car. The area surrounding the yard was residential.

Parts of the tank car were found one mile from the accident. Many cars were ignited and hundreds of acres of grassland burned. Most of the structural damage was within a radius of one mile, but broken glass was reported 3.5 mi east and 2.5 mi north. 71 cars and 4 containers were demolished. The cargo was PRM crystals in a water solution, to be used in a explosive product called TOVEX.. About 4000 pieces weighing 3,760 lbs or 19% of the tank shell were recovered.

**34) Southern Pacific Transportation Co. Freight Train 2nd BSM 22 Munitions Explosion, Benson, Arizona, May 24, 1973**

At 4:30 PM on May 24, 1973, Southern Pacific Co.'s freight train, 2nd BSM 22, left Lordsburg, New Mexico, a stop enroute from San Antonio to San Francisco. Cars 35 through 46 contained MK 82, 500-lb bombs. A series of explosions occurred between 6:50 PM and 1:15 AM that destroyed 12 munitions boxcars. The first explosion occurred with car 38. The explosion did not interfere with the progress of the train and occurred without the knowledge of the train crew. The conductor in the caboose notices burning crossties and notified the engineer who began braking. The train was traveling at 30 mph at the time.

A second explosion occurred which blew 6 bombs and a portion of a 7th from car 38. When the conductor saw fire and black smoke, he placed the train brakes in emergency and jumped from the caboose. Reconstruction of the accident showed that a piece of flooring was exposed to a fire of 1500 °F for 25 minutes. The outside of the board burned about 5 minutes.

As car 98 passed the point of the original explosion, a low order explosion of one of the bombs that had been expelled from car 38 produced a small crater. The train separated between cars 35 and 34. Explosions of varying intensity continued until 1:15 AM on May 25 (7 hours later!).

The accident occurred in a sparsely populated region of Arizona; the nearest residence was 5 miles away.

The MK 82 bombs consisted of coated steel casing filled with tritonal, fuse wells and

charging tubes for arming the bombs.

The major explosions produced a 115 foot by 93 foot crater, 25 feet deep and scorched the desert 1/4 mile in all directions. The force of three of the main explosions were recorded by Seismological Observatory in Tucson, Arizona as 1.6, 1.4 and 1.2 on the Richter scale. Several cars exploded at about the same time. About 500 of the 2600 bombs were recovered unexploded. Bombs were blown as far as 1 mile from the main crater area. Windows were shattered in a home 5 miles from the accident. Spacer cars between explosive cars would have been helpful.

### **35) Derailment of Southern Pacific Transportation Company Freight Train on May 12, 1989 and Subsequent Rupture of Calnev Petroleum Pipeline on May 25, 1989, San Bernardino, California**

About 7:36 AM on May 12, 1989, Southern Pacific Transportation Co freight train 1-MJLBP-111 consisting of a 4 unit locomotive on the head end of the train, 69 hopper cars loaded with trona and a 2 unit helper locomotive on the rear of the train derailed at milepost 486.8 in San Bernardino, California. The entire train was destroyed. Seven homes were totally destroyed and 4 were extensively damaged. 2 crew members died and 3 were injured. Two residents were killed and one injured. Homes in the surrounding area were evacuated because of concern the adjacent 14 inch Calnev pipeline carrying gasoline and under the wreckage would rupture. Residents returned to their homes 24 hours after the derailment.

About 8:05 AM on May 25, 1989, 13 days after the train derailment, the pipeline ruptured at the site of the derailment and ignited. 2 residents were killed, 3 received serious injuries and 16 reported minor injuries. Eleven homes were destroyed and 3 received smoke damage. 21 motor vehicles were destroyed. Residents within a four block area were evacuated.

Total injured: 6 serious, 23 minor. Total killed: 6

### **36) Derailment of CSX Transportation Inc Freight Train and Hazardous Materials Release Near Freeland, Michigan on July 22, 1989**

About 11:20 am July 22, 1989 CSX Transportation Inc freight train R-331-22 derailed near Freeland, Michigan. The train consisted of 2 locomotives, 17 loaded cars, 15 empty cars and an unoccupied caboose. Of the 14 derailed cars, 6 were tanks cars. About 1000 residents were evacuated for 7 days.

At about 11:20 AM the train crew felt a slight lurch followed almost immediately by the train going into emergency. When they looked back, they saw cars derailling amid a large fireball and black smoke. About 1000 residents were evacuated within a 1/2 mile radius of the accident site. Hazardous materials burned for 6 days. The evacuation order was lifted at 8:56 PM on July 29.

Of the 15 cars that contained hazardous materials, 7 derailed. They included cars loaded with styrene monomer, acrylonitrile, acrylic acid, petroleum naptha and a mixture of chlorosilanes, including trimethylchlorosilane. Styrene and acrylic acid are flammable, corrosive and can polymerize, releasing heat in the process. Acrylonitrile and trimethylchlorosilane are flammable liquids, corrosive and difficult to extinguish. The latter forms hydrochloric acid in the presence of water.

On July 23, all parties decided to allow the burning to proceed. On July 25, with the

trimethylchlorosilane still burning, the fire chief tried sodium bicarbonate. A reaction occurred that created hydrogen gas that ignited. Tried increased air to accelerate burning. Still burning on July 28. Tank cars emptied and evacuation lifted at 8:56 pm on July 29.

### **37) Southern Railway Company Train 154 Derailment with Fire and Explosion, January 25, 1969**

Southern Railway Company train 154 was wrecked at Laurel, Mississippi, about 145 mi north of New Orleans, on January 25, 1969 at about 4:15 am when 15 tank cars of liquefied petroleum gas derailed. The train, with four locomotives, 139 cars and caboose was moving northward at 30 mph when the west wheel on the lead truck of the 62nd car broke. The car derailed about 256 feet north; the entire train behind the 62nd car derailed 2,146 feet further north.

For about 40 minutes after the derailment there were continued explosions; pieces of tank cars ranging in size from 3/4 of a tank car to small parts were hurled up to 1,600 feet from the wreck, igniting dwellings and commercial buildings. At least 3 tanks rocket-propelled over long distances and started fires where they came to rest. Residents were evacuated from an area about 10 blocks square. A total of 54 residences were substantially destroyed and over 1350 residences suffered some damage. On January 26 residents returned and slow speed service was restored at 5:30 PM.

The first 61 cars remained on track. The rear 63 cars remained on track, with the 76th car stopping about 20 feet from the derailed cars. Large mushrooms of flaming propane shot hundreds of feet into the air. 19 pieces of tanks were hurled off the right of way. One piece of tank car was hurled into a pump-house of a city well and cut an 8 inch water main, reducing the pressure. The fires in the residential area were under control by 11 am, 6 1/2 hours after the wreck occurred.

A 37 foot section was propelled 1000 feet in the air from the wreck, bouncing several - times and coming to rest 1600 feet from the wreck center. A 37 foot section was propelled 800 feet from the wreck, striking the peak of a roof, then bounced to about 1100 feet from the wreck.

The Police Chief issued instructions to seal off the area and evacuate residents at 4:20 AM. There was no telephone and electric power in parts of the city. No explosions after 5 AM. A damaged tank car was exploded. Residents returned at 10:30 AM January 26. Broken windows as far south as 3 mi from Laurel. 2 fatalities and 33 persons hospitalized.

### **38) Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company Train Derailment and Collision with Tank Car Explosion, Crete, Nebraska, February 18, 1969**

At about 6:30 AM on February 18, 1969, Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company Train 64 derailed the 72nd to 90th cars at a turnout. The derailed cars struck standing cars on a siding south of the main track and the cars of train 824 standing on a track north of the main track. A tank car in 824 was completely fractured by the impact and released 29,200 gallons of anhydrous ammonia. A gas cloud was released and blanketed the area for quite some time due to weather conditions. 3 trespassers on train 64 were killed and 6 people were killed and 53 injured as a result of the ammonia cloud. The train had parted on the 71st car. The conductor and flagman saw a dense cloud forming, smelled ammonia and ran westward. The 72nd to 75th cars derailed southward



and struck a boxcar and came to rest about 700 ft east of the initial derailment. The 76th and following cars were diverted northward and struck the standing cars of No. 824, including the 3 tank cars loaded with anhydrous ammonia. The 38th and 40th cars containing ammonia were turned on side, east and west of Unona Ave. The tank of the 39th car shattered after being struck by derailed cars, the tank divided into two sections. The top portion, about 16 ft in length, was propelled 200 ft over Highway 33 and landed in the front yard of a residence. The bottom portion of the head, with part of the center sill attached, was hurled northward about 140 feet where it landed along Unona Ave. Anhydrous ammonia is a liquid that boils at -28°F at atmospheric pressure. One part liquid volume becomes 877 parts gas volume. Because of the inversion and lack of wind, the gas cloud remained. 5 people were killed immediately and 28 people injured seriously. Another person died subsequently. Between 200 and 300 people were evacuated with difficulty. Extra marsh were found at the local grain mill and National Guard armory. Evacuees returned home at 11 am February 20th.

**39) Penn Central Transportation Co Freight Train Derailment, Passenger Train Collision with Hazardous Material Car, Sound View, Connecticut, October 8, 1970**

8 cars of the westbound freight train Advance CB-1 derailed at Sound View, at 8:50 PM on October 8, 1970. This was immediately prior to the arrival of eastbound passenger train No. 174. This is a double track line. The entire passenger train was derailed and continued through flames. The derailment was due to the breakage of a truck side frame of a car on the freight train.

**40) Derailment of Tank Cars with Subsequent Fire and Explosion on Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company Near Des Moines, Iowa, September 1, 1975**

At **4PM** on September 1, 1975, 17 cars of a Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company train derailed on the main line near Des Moines, Iowa. Eleven of the derailed cars contained LPG.

About 4 PM, either the rear truck of car 26 or the lead of car 27 traversed the frog of a left-hand turnout and derailed towards the east. The coupler of car 28 penetrated the trailing end of car 29. The first of several explosions occurred about 9 minutes after the initial derailment. Parts of 3 tanks rocketed; 3 exploded and formed flat sheets and others burned.

Local firefighter responded immediately but before setting up a 2nd explosion occurred and they decided not to fight the fire. After retreating another car exploded and cast fragments into a nearby storage facility of LPG.

About 15 minutes after the train derailed, the Iowa State Fire Marshall observed the area from a helicopter and ordered that it be evacuated. The area was declared safe for reentry on September 5, 4 days after the accident. An estimated 300,000 gallons of LPG were consumed in the fire.

**41) St Louis Southwestern Railway Company Freight Train Derailment and Rupture of Vinyl Chloride Tank Car, Lewisville, Arkansas, March 29, 1978**

About 12:10 AM on March 29, 1978, 4 locomotive units and 43 cars of St Louis Southwestern Railway Company freight train SRASK derailed. The body of the 13th car struck and

ruptured the tank head of the 12th car releasing vinyl chloride into the air which ignited. Bldgs within 1500 ft of the ruptured car were damaged and 1700 residents evacuated. The body of the 13th car struck and ruptured the tank head of the 12th car releasing vinyl chloride into the air which ignited. The fire engulfed the locomotive and the first 16 cars, a fireball that extended 1000 ft. The intensity of the fire decreased over 24 hours. Residents were allowed to return the next day.

**42) Derailment of Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company's Train No. 584 and Subsequent Rupture of Tank Car Containing Liquefied Petroleum Gas, Waverly, Tennessee, February 22, 1978**

About 10:25 PM on February 22, 1978, 23 cars of a Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company's Train No. 584 derailed at a facing point switch in Waverly, Term. At 2:53 PM on February 24, a derailed tank car containing LPG ruptured, igniting with explosive force. As a result 16 persons died and 43 were injured. 18 buildings and 26 motor vehicles were destroyed. The Waverly fire equipment was destroyed in the fire, but equipment from neighboring communities was brought in.

**43) Head-On Collision of Two Penn Central Transportation Company Freight Trains Near Pettisville, Ohio, February 4, 1976**

About 11:52 PM on February 4, 1976, Penn Central Transportation Company freight train NY-12 collided head-on with freight train BM-7 near Pettisville, Ohio. The 3 locomotives and 21 cars of NY-12 and the 4 locomotives and 4 cars of BM-7 were derailed. The head locomotive unit of each train was destroyed and the two crew members in each unit were killed.

## **A Letter of Opposition to the South Coast Rail Project, Stoughton Alternative**

Wendy Van Dyke  
12 Woodland Drive  
South Easton, MA 02375

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that I am completely opposed to the expansion of the commuter rail line via the proposed Stoughton alternative. My reasons are listed below:

L-085.01

### **Impacts on Natural Environments/Habitats**

First and foremost, the irrevocable damage to the Hockomock Swamp, an Atlantic White Cedar swamp and Area of Critical Environmental Concern, (ACEC), is completely unacceptable. The DCR names it as the largest vegetated freshwater wetland system in Massachusetts, with outstanding natural resource qualities and one of the most extensive inland wildlife habitats in southeastern MA, all of which qualify the Hockomock as BioMap Core Habitat. It contains rare acid fen plant wetland communities and is listed by the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, (NHESP) as a Priority Natural Community.

A minimum of 34 vernal pools lie along the proposed Stoughton route, all of which have obligate species and are certified or certifiable. Although the route would follow an existing rail bed and utilize a MA DOT right of way, that rail bed has not been used in over 50 years and is at points virtually indiscernible from the surrounding swamp and forest. The new line would fragment the Hockomock, an environmental problem with its own consequences: "Habitat fragmentation is among the most important of all threats to global biodiversity and 'edge effects'---diverse physical and biotic alterations associated with the artificial boundaries of fragments---are dominant drivers of change in many fragmented landscapes. Edge effects can have serious impacts on species diversity and composition, community dynamics and ecosystem functioning."<sup>1</sup> Routing a rail line through the Hockomock would severely impact and quite possibly destroy its unique and valuable qualities that have been recognized thus far, and which should afford it protection under numerous state and federal laws.

The Hockomock is not the only ACEC which the Stoughton line would fragment: the Fowl Meadow/Ponkapoag Bog area, the Canoe River Aquifer and the Three-Mile River area would be traversed as well. What is the point of designating ACEC's if not for protection?

### **Water Resource Impacts**

The Stoughton alternative would carry trains within the protection Zone II of five of Easton's public wells. (Zone I is a 100 ft. – 400 ft. radius around a wellhead and Zone II comprises an area of an aquifer beyond Zone I that contributes water to a well.) The Stoughton line would pass just 500 ft. west of Easton Well #1. Thus construction impacts and storm water discharge, (significant if a diesel train line is built), would also be present just 500 ft. away from this well, approximately 1,600 ft. and 2,000 ft. away

L-085.02

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<sup>1</sup> Laurance, William F., et al., "Habitat Fragmentation, Variable Edge Effects, and the Landscape Divergence Hypothesis", 2007, <http://www.plosone.org>



from Wells #4 and #2, respectively, and somewhat further from Wells #3 and #5. This is a grave risk to Easton's water supply and thus, public health, and should not be a risk that is taken.

L-085.02

#### Economics/Feasibility

As if the environmental cost is not enough, the financial cost of the South Coast Rail project is currently estimated at over \$2 billion. As MA residents have seen with the Big Dig, projected costs are often far lower than the final, actual cost in dollars. The ridership estimates have been and remain controversial, laden with assumptions that passengers would flock to the new line instead of using existing routes, as well as assumptions that enough passengers would pay the train fare and parking fees for the new route to make it economically viable. Neither the Commonwealth, nor the MBTA, nor we the taxpayers can afford this fiscally irresponsible project.

L-085.03

#### Town Safety/Character

Seven grade-level crossings in Easton would substantially impact this small town in terms of safety and effects on historical buildings and on neighborhoods. Each crossing poses a threat to children and a delay to emergency vehicles trying to reach nearby hospitals and/or people in need of police, fire or medical assistance. The trains on the Stoughton alternative would pass within 25 ft. of historic buildings not built to withstand the vibrations, potentially damaging or destroying them. By passing within 25 ft. – 50 ft. of some neighborhoods and businesses, the rail line would negatively alter the overall character of this town, something residents have fought to preserve over many years of development.

L-085.04

In short, this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should NOT issue permits for the Stoughton alternative.

L-085.05

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**From:** Cathy Voci [cathden@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2011 5:38 PM

**To:** S CREIS, NAE

**Subject:** South Coastal Rail Project

Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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## RE: SOUTH COAST RAIL PROJECT

This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.

E-045.01

Cost – the \$2 Billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.

E-045.02

Feasibility – it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275 - \$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of 1 hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.

E-045.03

Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

E-045.04

Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of

E-045.05

E-045.05

one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.

E-045.06

7 traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.

E-045.07

Historical Areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.

E-045.08

Dividing the town impedes Police/Fire/Ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.

E-045.09

The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.

Name: Catherine Voci

Address: 11 Arthur Rd. N. Easton, MA

Phone or Email: [cathden@comcast.net](mailto:cathden@comcast.net)



---

**From:** Joel N. Weber II [joel@joelweber.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 26, 2011 12:09 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; aisling.o'shea@state.ma.us; aisling.oshea@state.ma.us  
**Cc:** gm@mbta.com; Joel N. Weber II  
**Subject:** Massachusetts South Coast Rail DEIR/DEIS comments

E-056.01

On May 25, 2008, a 5 year old boy rode his bike around the crossing gates at Oak Island Road in Revere after an MBTA train cleared the crossing. Shortly after this train passed, another MBTA train came in the opposite direction on the second track, which killed the boy.

While education may be effective at reducing accidents like this, I am concerned that education will never be 100% effective, and the numerous at grade crossings that the South Coast rail project proposes to convert to double track at grade crossings create numerous additional opportunities for an accident similar to the May 25, 2008 accident to recur.

E-056.02

I believe the South Coast Rail FEIS/FEIR should explain in better detail what purpose reverse-peak service will serve in the South Coast Rail operating pattern.

Broadly speaking, reverse-peak service can be useful for repositioning equipment, and for carrying passengers who are making a reverse commute.

E-056.03

Because of the length of the trip from the South Coast to Boston, the Fall River and New Bedford lines will probably have few opportunities for trainsets to make two peak direction trips during a peak period.

For example, if a train is scheduled to make its second morning trip from New Bedford to arrive at South Station at 9:00 AM, in the Stoughton Diesel alternative with the 85 minute travel time cited on page 4.1-70, it will need to depart New Bedford at 7:35 AM. Assuming the MBTA schedules a 20 minute recovery period, a reverse-peak train would need to arrive at New Bedford around 7:15 AM in order to make the 7:35 AM departure to reach South Station around 9:00 AM. To arrive at New Bedford at 7:15 AM, it would need to depart South Station at 5:50 AM. To be able to depart South Station at 5:50 AM, it would need to arrive around 5:30 AM if 20 minutes of recovery time is scheduled at South Station. The train from New Bedford that would arrive at South Station at 5:30 AM would likely be too early to attract significant ridership, at least for boardings from New Bedford, though perhaps it would attract more ridership at Stoughton.

E-056.04

The trip to Fall River will be slightly faster; the table on page 4.1-70 should be updated in the FEIS/FEIR to explain what the Fall River travel times will be for the various alternatives.

The table on page 4.1-70 should also be revised to list estimated times via Middleboro with both diesel and electric alternatives if enough track capacity were available. For example, this would be helpful in understanding if mid-day service that would carry tourists from Battleship Cove in Fall River to the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy could be practical. (This might include estimates with the Middleboro to Taunton track maintained for 59 MPH operation, as well as an estimate if that track is only maintained for 30 MPH operation.)

If an afternoon train were to depart South Station at 3:00 PM for its first outbound peak run of the day, in the Stoughton Diesel alternative, it would reach New Bedford at 4:25 PM. Assuming a 20 minute recovery time, it could then depart New Bedford at 4:45 PM, and reach South Station at 6:10 PM. Perhaps with 20 minute recovery time, a 6:30 PM departure time from South Station would still fit into the evening peak.

E-056.05

The FEIS/FEIR should be revised to include a complete proposed schedule based upon a plausible set of stations, showing the times at each of those stations, and indicating where reverse-peak trains which have value in repositioning rolling stock to enable that rolling stock to make two peak direction trips in a single peak period will need to meet peak direction trains. This would also be helpful in giving readers a sense of the travel

time between each station pair on each route.

E-056.06

Because the value of reverse-peak trips for equipment positioning will be minimal in the South Coast Rail system, a thorough study of passenger demand for reverse-peak service would be a valuable thing to include in the FEIS/FEIR. This study should look at whether reverse-peak bus service would be a feasible alternative to reverse-peak rail service, as the roads may be less congested in the reverse-peak direction than the peak direction, and reverse-peak ridership may not justify the costs associated with constructing a second track or running a nearly empty diesel hauled train.

Providing minimal or no reverse-peak service may also be beneficial in reducing the number of times the crossing gates close during peak commute times, thus reducing the impact of the South Coast Rail project on local traffic.

E-056.07

The FEIS/FEIR should also be revised to explore what infrastructure would be needed to operate all peak direction South Coast Rail service via Stoughton, with all reverse-peak service needed for any equipment repositioning operated via the Middleboro Line.

I have often been baffled that the MBTA has been able to find money to install double tracks along some parts of the north side of the commuter rail system where the double track is used by only a single line, but meanwhile has left in place some single tracks that all Middleboro, Plymouth/Kingston, and Greenbush trains must use, such as at JFK/Umass Station. I recognize that some of these upgrades are in areas with significant freight traffic, and/or Amtrak Downeaster service; but if the MBTA were to commit to double tracking the entire length of the route from South Station to where the Plymouth/Kingston Line diverges from the Middleboro Line, what impact would that have on making Middleboro Line capacity available for some South Coast rail trains, especially reverse-peak South Coast Rail trains?

E-056.08

If there is a need for double tracking to allow reverse-peak trains to pass peak direction trains on the Stoughton route, the area from Bridge St in Taunton to Foundry St in Easton appears to be a relatively long stretch free of crossings. The FEIS/FEIR should clearly explain whether a schedule could be developed which would make this the primary passing location for reverse-peak trains, assuming flexibility in scheduling operations at South Station and the potential for adjustments to schedules on other lines. In particular, it may be desirable to fix the schedule of those trainsets which will complete a peak direction trip, a reverse-peak trip, and a second peak direction trip during a single peak period first, and then adjust the schedule of any trainsets that will only be able to make a single peak direction trip during a peak period to put the meets where they can minimize the need for additional double track, especially at grade level crossings.

E-056.09

For any at grade crossing, the FEIS/FEIR should include an estimate of the cost and impacts of a grade separation, to justify not using a grade separation.

E-056.10

The FEIS/FEIR should have a table exploring costs of grade crossings vs grade separations. This table should have one line for each crossing between Canton Junction and Fall River / New Bedford, as well as a line at the bottom with grand totals. It should have columns for estimated cost for crossing gates, paving, etc if the crossing is built at grade, estimated cost to construct a grade separated crossing, estimated deaths and injuries per year, ten years, or hundred years if built as a level crossing, estimated average annual property damage cost from accidents if built as a level crossing, estimated total hours each year spent waiting at that crossing (number of people waiting times average time spent waiting), and estimated lost wages from the time wasted waiting at the crossing.

The FEIS/FEIR should also list the estimated number of people who will travel on the road each day at each crossing, and the number of people who will travel in passenger trains through each crossing each day, and provide a comparison to the number of people who travel on the least heavily traveled portion of the Interstate Highway system. As the entire Interstate Highway system is fully grade separated, this will help readers of the FEIS/FEIR to understand whether any claimed unaffordability of any potential grade separation in the South Coast Rail project is consistent with historical federal expenditures.

E-056.11

The FEIS/FEIR should discuss the feasibility of using the ALP45-DP locomotive in South Coast Rail service. Both New Jersey Transit and Montreal's AMT have placed orders for these locomotives, which use overhead catenary power where it is available, and diesel

engines otherwise. This might improve travel times, lower emissions, and reduce the cost of energy for the Canton Junction to South Station portion of the Fall River / New Bedford trips, while at the same time reducing the infrastructure costs relative to installing catenary along the entire route.

E-056.11

(I suspect the substation(s) feeding power to the Providence Line's existing overhead wires might need to be upgraded to handle a higher wattage than they currently do if the MBTA were to start drawing power from those wires, and negotiation with Amtrak over how to divide the electric bill would obviously be required.)

The FEIS/FEIR should also explore the feasibility of using an ALP45-DP with a modification to remove one of its two 2100 horsepower Caterpillar diesel generators, and replacing it with several Tesla Roadster style battery packs of a total weight similar to one of those 2100 horsepower diesel generators.

The FEIS/FEIR should spell out how much weight would be saved by removing one of those 2100 horsepower diesels, how many kilowatts the diesel(s) in a 4200 horsepower locomotive produce at full throttle, how many kilowatts the diesel generator(s) are expected to produce on average during the Canton Junction to Fall River / New Bedford portion of the run at the actual throttle settings that would be used, and how many kilowatt hours can be stored in a set of several Tesla Roadster battery packs that weigh as much as a single 2100 horsepower diesel.

[http://www.teslamotors.com/display\\_data/TeslaRoadsterBatterySystem.pdf](http://www.teslamotors.com/display_data/TeslaRoadsterBatterySystem.pdf) has some specifications on the battery pack used in a Tesla Roadster, though it would also be good to solicit information about the battery packs used in the Nissan Leaf, Ford Focus Electric, and Chevy Volt.

I am under the impression that removing one of the two diesels from an ALP45-DP may remove a weight equal to enough Tesla Roadster battery packs to store the full output of the two diesel generators for about a half hour.

While the Canton Junction to New Bedford run is nearly an hour, I suspect that a diesel would not be run at full power for the vast majority of the run, and moreover, with batteries, regenerative braking may be more effective than on a simple diesel. This implies that a battery pack replacing one of the two diesels might last significantly more than a half hour; depending on how the numbers work, such a battery pack might be able to cover the entire trip from Canton Junction to New Bedford.

(Regenerative braking might still be possible without batteries if the braking energy is used for lighting, heating, and air conditioning in the coaches; the FEIS/FEIR should comment on whether the diesel alternatives will offer this sort of regenerative braking.)

Additionally, the ALP45-DP used by New Jersey Transit has a main transformer that can operate on the 25 hz power used in New Jersey.

The catenary Amtrak uses in Massachusetts is a newer design that uses 60 hz power, and my understanding is that a transformer which can run only on 60 hz power will be smaller and lighter than one which can also handle 25 hz power. I believe the FEIS/FEIR should clearly state the weight of the 25 hz main transformer in an NJT ALP45-DP, and the weight that could be saved with a 60 hz only transfer, along with mention of how many additional kilowatt hours of batteries might be carried by taking advantage of that weight savings.

I assume that with a catenary / battery / diesel hybrid locomotive, installing substations and overhead wires at the terminal stations at Fall River and New Bedford (and potentially Forge Park/495 and Needham Heights) and overnight and mid-day layover facilities would be desirable.

E-056.12

I believe that battery prices have the potential to come down rapidly over the next several years, as automakers build more and more cars like the Tesla Model S, the Nissan Leaf, and the Ford Focus Electric.

There may be a significant change in the economic feasibility of a battery powered commuter rail locomotive today vs when the South Coast Rail project finally is ready to have rolling stock delivered.

I hope that 10-15 years from now, commuters will not be in the difficult position of needing to choose between riding a diesel powered commuter train using a locomotive that



is less than halfway through its useful life (and which MBTA fare payers and Massachusetts taxpayers are less than halfway through paying off the bonds for) or driving a zero emissions automobile on a highway that Massachusetts taxpayers might prefer to avoid paying to widen.

E-056.12

Joel N. Weber II  
225 Summer St #3  
Somerville MA 02143

145 Smith Avenue  
Stoughton, Massachusetts 02072-3938  
May 10, 2011

United States Army  
Corps of Engineers  
New England District  
696 Virginia Road  
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-2751

Dear Sir / Madam,

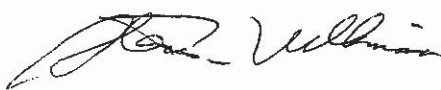
I am writing with regard to the South Coast Rail proposals. Having reviewed the choices, it makes no sense that the Stoughton alternative is preferred. It requires the most construction and disruption with potentially adverse environmental impact. I ask you to re-consider the alternatives and move to use as much existing infrastructure, through the Attleborough or Middleborough alternatives, as possible, at least, to test the theory that rail service to New Bedford is warranted before engaging in massive construction.

L-025.01

Furthermore, the announced justification for this project is passenger rail service. If passenger service is not the real reason for this expansion, that should be stated so that the citizens of the Commonwealth can truthfully evaluate whether they want this expansion before investing vast sums of taxpayer funds on a rail line that may not be significantly used by the passengers for which it is being justified.

Thank you, very much, for your consideration.

Regards,



Steven E. Wilkinson

MAY12'11 REG DIV

---

**From:** Rosemary Zehntner [razehntner@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 05, 2011 10:56 AM  
**To:** SCREIS, NAE; shea@state.ma.us  
**Subject:** South Coast Rail Environmental Impact Statement/Report

Dear M. Anacheke-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan,

I am writing in support of the South Coast rail project. It is the intelligent way of the future as gas prices rise and global warming continues.

The project would clearly benefit the Greater New Bedford area. However, I also believe there will be substantial benefit to the greater Boston area as well as Cape Cod & the Islands. Think about the possibility of Boston area residents taking a train to New Bedford, then hopping on a ferry to Martha's Vineyard and/or Nantucket without ever getting into a car. This scenario eliminates vast numbers of ferry-bound cars crossing the Cape Cod bridges adding to traffic congestion on the Cape. It would also reduce traffic congestion on the Islands as folks arrive without their cars to use local public transportation which in turn boosts the islands' economies.

E-023.01

When my husband and I moved to South Dartmouth ten years ago he commuted to Boston every day. Four years later that was history as the commute was too daunting to keep up. If the train had been running he very well might have continued to work in Boston.

I am in support of the shortest, most efficient route from New Bedford to Boston.

E-023.02

Thank you for your consideration.

Rosemary Zehntner  
307 Smith Neck Road  
S. Dartmouth, MA 02748



# Public Hearings

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

PERMIT APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
SOUTH COAST RAIL DEIS

MAY 4, 2011  
QUALTERS MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
240 EAST STREET  
MANSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
7:00 p.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ROSENBERG: Good evening and welcome to this public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding the application submitted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for a permit to discharge fill material in wetlands and waterways for the construction of a passenger rail or other public transportation facility, connecting the terminal stations of Fall River and New Bedford with South Station in Boston.

My name is Larry Rosenberg, and I'm the Chief of Public Affairs for the United States Army Corps of Engineers in New England, and I will be your moderator and your facilitator this evening.

Our Hearing Officer tonight is Lieutenant Colonel Steven Howell, the Deputy District Engineer, for the Army Corps of Engineers in New England.

Should you need copies of the public notice, the hearing procedures, or the other pertinent information, it is available at the registration desks.

I should point out that the Corps of

1 Engineers has made no decision regarding this permit  
2 application, not a one.

3 The agenda for this hearing is this:  
4 Following this introduction, Kristina Egan from the  
5 Massachusetts Department of Transportation will give  
6 a brief overview of the proposed transportation  
7 project.

8 Following Ms. Egan, our Hearing Officer,  
9 Lieutenant Colonel Howell, will address the hearing.  
10 Colonel Howell will be followed by the Corps' permit  
11 manager, who will then discuss the Corps' role and  
12 an overview of the permit.

13 Following that, a representative from  
14 the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act will  
15 review the role of the Commonwealth in this process.

16 Before we begin, I'd like to remind you  
17 all of the importance of filling out these cards.  
18 These cards serve two purposes: First, they let us  
19 know that you're interested in the project, so we  
20 can keep you informed in the future.

21 Second, they provide me a list of who  
22 wished to speak this evening. If you did not  
23 complete a card but wish to speak or receive future  
24 information regarding this permit application, one

1 will be provided at the registration desk.

2 Now, as there are many who wish to  
3 provide comment this evening, you will be provided  
4 three minutes to speak, no more.

5 Also for your convenience, an additional  
6 stenographer is available near the registration  
7 table should you wish to provide comment on the  
8 record without the imposed time restrictions. These  
9 statements, along with any written statements that  
10 you may have, will receive equal consideration with  
11 those presented today.

12 I should remind you that if you do have  
13 written statements, there is a box right at  
14 the -- right next to the stenographer, and you can  
15 just put them in there, and we will put them right  
16 into the record.

17 One additional comment: We are here to  
18 receive your comments, not to enter into any  
19 discussion of those comments or to reach any  
20 conclusion. Any questions you have should be  
21 directed to the record and not to the individuals on  
22 this panel.

23 Thank you very much.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, Kristina Egan.



1 MS. EGAN: Thank you, Larry, and good  
2 evening to all of you. I am joined here tonight by  
3 Frank DePaola, who is the Assistant General Manager  
4 of Design and Construction at the MBTA, as well as  
5 the Acting Highway Commissioner from Mass. DOT.  
6 We're very happy to have him with us tonight.

7 The purpose of my presentation is to  
8 give you a very brief overview of the project, and,  
9 Larry, do I just go page down?

10 Okay. So the project is a top priority  
11 of the Patrick-Murray Administration because it  
12 addresses a long-standing need to connect the South  
13 Coast to Boston in a much firmer way than just  
14 Route 24, which as we all know is unpredictably  
15 congested.

16 We are predicting that we would have  
17 about eight to 9,000 people that would use the train  
18 every day, and this would bring economic justice  
19 benefits to Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton as  
20 well as the communities in between.

21 We also have done an analysis that shows  
22 that there will be significant economic development  
23 that will result from this project. We're looking  
24 at 3,800 permanent new jobs as well as about -- nearly

1 \$500 million in new business sales every year, and  
2 that's just by connecting the economies of these  
3 cities with Boston and making it more productive for  
4 the labor force and employers to work with one  
5 another.

6 Lastly, there's significant environmental  
7 benefits to the project. This is a picture of  
8 climate change. As we all know this is a threat  
9 that we need to be dealing with. We are anticipating  
10 up to about 300,000 miles that are driven every day  
11 to be taken off the road by people that would switch  
12 from their cars to transit. This has air quality as  
13 well as climate benefits.

14 An important part of the project for  
15 Mass. DOT is to focus the development that will  
16 occur because of the train and the development that  
17 is coming our way for jobs and homes and places that  
18 make sense, places where people are already living  
19 and working, and this will enable us to preserve a  
20 lot of the farms and the fields and the forests in  
21 the area. We call this "smart growth."

22 Smart growth would multiply the benefits  
23 of the project alone, and we're looking at about  
24 10,000 fewer acres would be developed and 6,000 of

1 those would be forest; 3,000, farmland. We would  
2 also reduce household water consumption by 21 gallons  
3 per day.

4 In looking at the best way to connect  
5 Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, and Boston, we  
6 looked at a whole suite of alternatives starting  
7 about four years ago. We looked at everything from  
8 going through the Middleborough line, to running  
9 monorail and light rail up the highway system.

10 We looked at reviving an old right of  
11 way in Mansfield. We looked at backing into  
12 Attleboro and then going up to Boston.

13 The DEIS, the Draft Environmental Impact  
14 Statement, that we're talking about tonight explores  
15 all of these alternatives and then goes in detail  
16 into three particular corridors, which are broken  
17 out into eight alternatives.

18 These three corridors are the Rapid Bus,  
19 which goes up Route 24 through a zipper lane and up  
20 to South Station; the Attleboro Rail alternative,  
21 which jogs west from Taunton and then goes up to  
22 South Station; and the Stoughton Alternative, which  
23 would extend service from the existing Stoughton  
24 Commuter Rail Station, south to Fall River in



1 New Bedford.

2           There is a variation on that that's  
3 called the Whittenton variation. Now, for the three  
4 rail alternatives, we looked at both diesel and  
5 electric and looked at the comparison there.

6           There's a three-step sequential process  
7 to eliminate the different alternatives, and we  
8 started with the question, which is according to the  
9 Corps of Engineers' process: Does the alternative  
10 meet the project purpose when we looked at these  
11 eight different alternatives?

12           Our conclusion -- the conclusion in the  
13 DEIS is that the Rapid Bus does not meet the project  
14 purpose -- and this is a conclusion, I should say,  
15 this is Mass. DOT's conclusion of the analysis in  
16 the DEIS.

17           And this is basically because the bus  
18 would take 103 minutes, which is over an hour and a  
19 half, longer than it takes to drive. So it gets  
20 caught, the bus gets caught in congestion as you get  
21 up to South Station, even though there's a zipper  
22 lane.

23           The rail alternatives are significantly  
24 faster. The Stoughton and the Attleboro alternatives

1 are looking at about an hour, 15 for a trip.

2 The diesel is ten minutes slower than  
3 the electric, and the Whittenton Variation is very  
4 serpentine. It goes through Taunton, and it's very  
5 serpentine, and so it's 11 to 12 minutes longer than  
6 the Stoughton and the Attleboro Alternatives; but  
7 the conclusion here that's stated up here in the  
8 purple at the bottom is straight out of the DEIS,  
9 saying that the Rapid Bus really does not carry very  
10 many people.

11 The second part of the process is to  
12 look at is it practicable? And practicable  
13 basically means can it work? Is it operationally  
14 feasible? The main difference between the Attleboro  
15 and Stoughton Alternatives is that Stoughton would  
16 extend existing train service down to Fall River and  
17 New Bedford; and Attleboro, we would have to add all  
18 new trains. So it would be 38 new trains to the  
19 Attleboro Alternative and about four new trains a  
20 day for the Stoughton Alternative.

21 What we found is adding all of these new  
22 trains to a significantly congested corridor, the  
23 Northeast Corridor, where all the Acela trains, the  
24 AMTRAK, and existing Providence commuter rail

1       trains, there was a big train jam that happened at  
2       the South Station.

3               Now, the Commonwealth last year looked  
4       at expanding South Station more than what we thought  
5       we would do before; and when we looked at the  
6       analysis again, we found that that jam just moves  
7       south down the corridor. So we still had a train  
8       jam.

9               So then we said well, how can we solve  
10       that train jam? And the only way to do it is to  
11       widen the Northeast Corridor where all these trains  
12       are going right now, and we would have to widen it  
13       through Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Back Bay, and,  
14       in fact, we'd have to sink a new tunnel under Back  
15       Bay Station, the Orange Line. This alone would cost  
16       \$2.4 billion. So we're looking at the Attleboro  
17       Alternative costing over \$4 billion in order to  
18       construct.

19              So, again, what the DEIS states is in  
20       purple at the bottom, it concludes that the  
21       Attleboro Alternative is operationally infeasible.

22              The last part of the three-step process  
23       is to say well, which of these alternatives have  
24       environmental -- the most environmental damage? I'm



1       sorry -- the least amount of environmental damage.

2               And we looked at a variety of different  
3 resources when we prepared our technical reports for  
4 the Army Corps of Engineers. We looked at 18  
5 different resource areas. One of the critical  
6 resources is wetlands in applying for a Clean Water  
7 Act permit.

8               The numbers of the wetland -- wetland  
9 acres impacted are up here on the board. As you can  
10 see, the Bus and the Attleboro Alternatives have  
11 almost doubled the wetland impacts of the -- of the  
12 Stoughton Alternative. It isn't surprising to many  
13 because many people have been very worried about the  
14 environmental impacts of the Stoughton Alternative.

15              I want to make a word about wetlands.  
16 All wetlands are not created equal. Some wetlands  
17 are more valuable than others. So, particularly in  
18 the Hockomock Swamp, we looked very carefully at the  
19 data in that area, which a lot of people are very  
20 concerned about because of its role in the ecosystem  
21 as well as providing groundwater and being a habitat  
22 for rare species.

23              We found that there are actually very  
24 limited impact on habitat, and there's no loss of

1 wetlands from the swamp that's intact right now.

2 The loss of wetlands would happen from the wetlands  
3 that have grown up on the old right-of-way when we  
4 restore it. We would put a trestle in, in order to  
5 allow for animals and creatures to pass beneath the  
6 trestle, and we really found that the impact was  
7 much more limited than I think a lot of people have  
8 been led to believe over time.

9 I want to make one more note about the  
10 Whittenton Variation versus the Stoughton Alternative.  
11 The Stoughton Alternative again goes straight down.  
12 It's the quickest and most direct route. The  
13 Whittenton Alternative is rather serpentine. It  
14 goes through Taunton.

15 There's several reasons why the  
16 Massachusetts Department of Transportation does not  
17 believe that the Whittenton Alternative is the best  
18 alternative. The first is that it takes a lot  
19 longer. It takes about 11 to 12 minutes longer from  
20 someone from Fall River and New Bedford.  
21 Consequently, it serves less riders from Fall River  
22 and New Bedford and picks up more in Taunton. Since  
23 the purpose of the project is really for Fall River  
24 and New Bedford, we do not want to see that kind of

1 drop-off in ridership in those cities.

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Point of order.

3 MS. EGAN: The Whittenton Variation --

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Point of order.

5 MR. ROSENBERG: We have a question.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Could you please talk  
7 slower. It's very hard to comprehend --

8 MS. EGAN: All of it?

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- speaking so quickly.

10 MS. EGAN: Okay. I will do my best.

11 I'm actually almost at the end of the presentation.

12 I'm happy to answer questions after the hearing,  
13 too, if people want to talk to me after the hearing.

14 The Whittenton Variation also has seven  
15 more grade crossings, which has raised some concerns,  
16 some safety concerns, and particularly has noise  
17 impacts on the environmental justice communities in  
18 the Whittenton area.

19 So, the conclusion from the Massachusetts  
20 Department of Transportation -- sorry -- is that the  
21 Stoughton Alternative is our preferred alternative  
22 in the state portion of this document, which is a  
23 joint federal/state document. We have named the  
24 Stoughton Alternative as our preferred alternative



1 and given you some of the reasons that I've outlined  
2 in this presentation.

3 I'll conclude by saying that we believe  
4 this is a really green project, one with many  
5 environmental impacts. We'll see air quality  
6 benefits. We'll contribute to climate solutions.  
7 We'll bring economic development benefits to  
8 environmental justice populations that have been  
9 left out of economic growth in Massachusetts, and  
10 these benefits really are for decades to come. This  
11 is a 100-year plus infrastructure project that will  
12 bring many benefits over time for Massachusetts.

13 In conclusion, I want to thank the Army  
14 Corps of Engineers for this opportunity to present  
15 the project and for working with you over the last  
16 four years to develop this -- the data for this  
17 document.

18 And I also want to thank everyone here  
19 who has come to share your thoughts. Not only the  
20 folks at the front table, but the Massachusetts  
21 Department of Transportation, the MBTA, will be  
22 listening very carefully to what you have to offer  
23 tonight.

24 Thank you.

1                   MR. ROSENBERG: I would just like to  
2 restate what Kristina said. The project proponent,  
3 the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, has  
4 an information session outside, and they are here to  
5 answer any questions that you have but not -- that  
6 is not part of this hearing.

7                   Ladies and gentlemen, the hearing will  
8 now get started in earnest. I'd like to introduce  
9 our Hearing Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Steven Howell.  
10 Colonel Howell.

11                  LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWELL: I'd like to  
12 welcome you today to this public hearing on a  
13 request for permit by the Commonwealth of  
14 Massachusetts Department of Transportation for their  
15 proposal to establish passenger rail service between  
16 Boston and the communities of New Bedford and Fall  
17 River under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

18                  Before we begin, I would like to thank  
19 you for involving yourself in this environmental  
20 review process. Please feel free to bring up any  
21 and all topics that you feel needed to be discussed  
22 on the record. I assure you that all of your  
23 comments will be considered during this process.

24                  I am Lieutenant Colonel Steven Howell,

1 Deputy District Engineer for the New England District  
2 of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Our  
3 headquarters is located in Concord, Massachusetts.

4 Other Corps of Engineers representatives  
5 with me tonight include Jennifer McCarthy, Chief of  
6 our Regulatory Division; Karen Adams, Chief of  
7 Permits and Enforcement Branch of our Regulatory  
8 Division; Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, our Permit Project  
9 Manager; John Ashley, our Chief Counsel; Kate  
10 Atwood, our Staff Archeologist; and Larry Rosenberg,  
11 our Chief of Public Affairs, who will facilitate  
12 tonight's hearing.

13 Tonight's hearing is being conducted as  
14 part of the National Environmental Policy Act  
15 requirements and the Corps of Engineers regulatory  
16 program, solely to listen to your comments.

17 This request before us involves  
18 placement of fill in waters of the United States,  
19 including wetlands in order to construct new public  
20 transportation facilities connecting the cities of  
21 Fall River and New Bedford with South Station in  
22 Boston.

23 The proposed work would be located in  
24 wetlands on or adjacent to existing active or



1 inactive railroad or highway corridors in several  
2 towns in Southern Massachusetts.

3 Wetland and other waterway impacts would  
4 range between roughly 10.3 and 21.5 acres, depending  
5 on the alternatives selected. These impacts are  
6 dispersed along the roughly 60-mile transportation  
7 corridors between Boston and the terminal stations  
8 in New Bedford and Fall River.

9 The project facilities are subject to  
10 the jurisdiction of the Corps under Section 404 of  
11 the Clean Water Act and also the United States  
12 Environmental Protection Agency, under Section 402  
13 of the Clean Water Act.

14 The Corps' jurisdiction for this proposed  
15 activity is limited to Section 404 of the Clean  
16 Water Act, which I will discuss in more detail in a  
17 moment.

18 The focus of this comment period and  
19 these hearings is to receive comments on the Draft  
20 Environmental Impact Statement and the proposed  
21 placement of fill material in the wetlands and  
22 waterways, the Corps' primary area of jurisdiction  
23 for this project.

24 I would like to briefly review the Corps

1 of Engineers' responsibilities in this process.

2 First, the Corps' jurisdiction in this case is  
3 Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates  
4 the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters  
5 of the United States, including wetlands.

6 Second, the detailed regulation that  
7 explains the procedure for evaluating permit  
8 applications and unauthorized work is Title 33, Code  
9 of Federal Regulation, parts 320 and 332.

10 Third, the Corps' decision rests upon  
11 several important factors to include Section 404(b)(1)  
12 of the Clean Water Act, which stipulates that the  
13 Corps can only issue a permit for the least  
14 environmentally damaging practicable alternative, or  
15 LEDPA, for meeting the overall project purpose.

16 In addition, the Corps must reach the  
17 conclusion that issuance of a permit for the LEDPA  
18 is not contrary to the public interest.

19 In accordance with those aforementioned  
20 regulatory and statutory authorities, our decision  
21 on whether to issue a permit will be based on an  
22 evaluation of the probable impacts of the proposed  
23 activity on the public interest.

24 Our decision will reflect the national

1 concern for both the protection and utilization of  
2 important resources to include the benefits that may  
3 reasonably appear from the proposal must be balanced  
4 against its reasonably foreseen detriments, and  
5 these factors will be considered in our determination  
6 on issuance of the permit.

7 And all factors, which may be relevant  
8 to the proposal will be considered prior to our  
9 making a decision, and those factors include, but  
10 are not limited to conservation, economics,  
11 aesthetics, wetland values, fish and wildlife  
12 values, historic properties, recreation, water  
13 supply, food production, and, in general, the needs  
14 and welfare of the American people.

15 The Corps conducts a broad-based public  
16 interest review. This hearing is part of that  
17 review. All factors affecting the public will be  
18 included in our evaluation. Your comments will help  
19 us in reaching a decision. Additionally, the Corps,  
20 like all other federal agencies, is responsible  
21 for complying with the National Environmental Policy  
22 Act of 1969, or NEPA.

23 NEPA requires that all agencies of the  
24 federal government shall ensure that the environmental



1 amenities and values may be given appropriate  
2 consideration in decision-making, along with  
3 economic and technical considerations.

4 In this instance, the Corps has determined  
5 that the issuance of a permit authorizing the South  
6 Coast Rail proposal would represent a major federal  
7 action with potentially significant impacts affecting  
8 the quality of the human environment; therefore, the  
9 Corps has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact  
10 Statement to address the effects of this proposal.

11 Our Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS  
12 was published in the Federal Registry 7 -- 73 FR  
13 64927, October 31st, 2008.

14 Corps scoping meetings were held on  
15 December 2nd and 3rd, 2008 in North Dartmouth and  
16 Taunton, Massachusetts. And a public notice  
17 announcement -- the public notice announcing the  
18 availability of the DEIS was published on March 23,  
19 2011. The DEIS evaluates three principal rail  
20 routes and a Rapid Bus/highway route. The No-Action  
21 Alternative is also evaluated.

22 The DEIS was also prepared to serve as a  
23 joint Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, MEPA,  
24 and NEPA document to meet the procedural requirements

1 of both state and federal law and serve as a  
2 combined DEIS Draft Environmental Impact Report,  
3 DEIR. The state's MEPA review is being conducted  
4 simultaneously with the NEPA process.

5 Significant issues analyzed in depth in  
6 the DEIS and DEIR include impacts to waters of the  
7 United States, including vernal pools and other  
8 wetlands, cultural resources, threatened and  
9 endangered species, transportation, air quality,  
10 including greenhouse gas emissions, noise and  
11 vibration, water resources, biodiversity, open  
12 space, and socioeconomic effects, to name a few.

13 Lastly, to date, no decision has been  
14 made by the Corps of Engineers with regard to this  
15 permit. It is our responsibility to evaluate both  
16 the environmental and socioeconomic impacts prior to  
17 our decision. And in order to accomplish that, we  
18 need your input. The record of this hearing will  
19 remain open, and written comments may be submitted  
20 tonight or by mail until 27 May 2011.

21 All comments will receive equal  
22 consideration. I would like -- now like to introduce  
23 my project manager, Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, who will  
24 give you more details on the Corps' role and

1 information about the permit.

2 Alan.

3 MR. ANACHEKA-NASEMANN: Thank you, sir.

4 Good evening and welcome. Thank you for  
5 attending this hearing and participating in the  
6 Corps' Draft Environmental Impact Statement or DEIS  
7 process.

8 My name is Alan Anacheka-Nasemann, and I  
9 am a senior ecologist with the Corps and the Project  
10 Manager for review of Mass. DOT's permit application.

11 I'm here to talk to you tonight about  
12 the Corps' role in South Coast Rail, the regulations  
13 we work under, and our DEIS process.

14 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
15 received an application for a permit from Mass. DOT  
16 to fill wetlands in order to construct new  
17 transportation corridors and facilities. All of the  
18 alternative transportation corridors cross wetlands  
19 and other waters of the United States. Specifically,  
20 they would involve expansion of existing passenger,  
21 freight, and/or highway corridors into wetlands,  
22 reconstruction of rail lines on existing but  
23 abandoned railroad lines that contain wetlands  
24 and/or construction of brand new railroad corridors



1       into wetlands.

2                   The Corps of Engineers has authority  
3 over this proposal under Section 404 of the Clean  
4 Water Act. This law requires a Corps permit to  
5 discharge fill material into waters of the United  
6 States, including adjacent wetlands. In reviewing  
7 this permit application, we must determine the least  
8 environmentally damaging practicable alternative, or  
9 LEDPA, ensure that that LEDPA will not cause or  
10 contribute to significant degradation of waters of  
11 the United States, perform a public interest review,  
12 and, finally, determine whether or not to issue a  
13 permit for the LEDPA.

14                  With regard to South Coast Rail, please  
15 keep in mind that the Corps of Engineers is a  
16 regulatory agency. We are not a sponsor of this  
17 project. We are a reviewing agency, not a funding  
18 agency. We are a neutral party in the review of  
19 every permit application we receive. We are neither  
20 a supporter nor opponent of any particular project.

21                  The Corps' regulatory program is funded  
22 by Congress, and we are spending taxpayer dollars to  
23 review this proposal; however, we are not funding  
24 Mass. DOT or the construction of this project. The

1 Corps must determine the least environmentally  
2 damaging practicable alternative, but we do not have  
3 a preferred alternative.

4 At the end of the process, the Corps is  
5 required to render a permit decision, but we are not  
6 required to resolve every issue or concern that you  
7 may have.

8 So why is the Corps writing an  
9 Environmental Impact Statement? Because like all  
10 other federal agencies, we are subject to the  
11 National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. This  
12 act requires that all federal agencies must ensure  
13 that environmental amenities and values may be given  
14 appropriate consideration in decision-making, along  
15 with economic and technical considerations.  
16 Decision-making is the key phrase here. Specifically,  
17 the decision we must make is whether or not to issue  
18 a permit to Mass. DOT for this proposal.

19 NEPA stipulates that an Environmental  
20 Impact Statement is required when the proposal  
21 represents a major federal action with potentially  
22 significant impacts affecting the quality of the  
23 human environment.

24 One other aspect of NEPA is that it

1 encourages the federal government to work with state  
2 and local levels of government to prevent duplication  
3 of effort. So the Corps in cooperation with the  
4 Commonwealth decided to write a joint federal  
5 Environmental Impact Statement and state  
6 Environmental Impact Report. The state and federal  
7 governments do have different processes, but the  
8 outcome is very similar: an environmental review  
9 document that seeks to fully disclose the impacts of  
10 the alternatives under consideration.

11 The major difference is that in a DEIR,  
12 the applicant names their preferred alternative. As  
13 indicated in the document, DOT provided the preface  
14 where they have indicated their preferred alternative,  
15 but, again, the Corps of Engineers does not have a  
16 preferred alternative.

17 Our Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
18 is a discussion of alternatives, but it is not a  
19 selection of a particular alternative. It is a full  
20 disclosure of the impacts of each alternative, but  
21 it is not a decision.

22 Finally, it is a statement of the  
23 consequences of a permit to build the project, but  
24 it is not a permit in itself.



1                   So our comment period closes on May 27,  
2                   2011. After that, the Corps will review all of the  
3                   comments, request any additional data needed from  
4                   Mass. DOT to further identify impacts, and at that  
5                   point write a Final Environmental Impact Statement  
6                   at which time we will name the least environmentally  
7                   practicable alternative and provide more detailed  
8                   evaluation of that alternative.

9                   After that, the Corps will write a record  
10                  of decision and either issue or deny a permit.

11                  To summarize, Section 404 of the Clean  
12                  Water Act is our regulatory authority in this  
13                  matter, and NEPA is our process for reviewing and  
14                  evaluating the proposal and its environmental  
15                  consequences. Our process must run its full course  
16                  before we can make a decision on this permit.

17                  I would now like to introduce Aisling  
18                  O'Shea from the Executive Office of Energy and  
19                  Environmental Affairs. Ms. O'Shea will give you a  
20                  brief overview of the Massachusetts Environmental  
21                  Policy Act and process.

22                  MS. O'SHEA: Good evening. My name is  
23                  Aisling O'Shea, and I'm an Environmental Analyst  
24                  with the MEPA office, the Massachusetts Environmental

1 Policy Act. We are reviewing the Draft Environmental  
2 Impact Report, combined DEIS, DEIR, that the  
3 Massachusetts Department of Transportation has  
4 recently filed, and the public comment period is  
5 ongoing.

6 I'd like to give you a brief overview of  
7 our process and just talk about how to submit  
8 comments, et cetera. So, the Massachusetts  
9 Environmental Policy Act requires state agencies and  
10 other project proponents to study the consequences  
11 of their proposal and to make sure that all efforts  
12 are made to avoid and minimize environmental impacts  
13 and where there's unavoidable impacts to make sure  
14 that there's appropriate mitigation.

15 The thresholds -- not all projects are  
16 subject to our review. The threshold for projects  
17 that are subject to our review are outlined in our  
18 regulations, and I have our website up there, but I  
19 also wanted to note for people if you didn't already  
20 pick one up that I have a handout, which I put  
21 outside on the table that DOT had set up, and that  
22 gives you a bit more information on submitting  
23 comments to MEPA, and it has my contact information  
24 there as well, if you have any questions or anything

1 following this meeting that you want to call or  
2 email, but it will also give you information on  
3 where to send your comments.

4 Now, as Alan mentioned, we are -- the  
5 state and federal review is being undertaken  
6 simultaneously. We're coordinating with the Corps  
7 and their MEPA process to streamline the process,  
8 and we have coordinated our comment dates with them  
9 also.

10 Now, MEPA applies to projects that require  
11 a state agency action, which could be a permit or a  
12 funding or a land transfer, and the particular  
13 threshold. Some projects require an initial file of  
14 an Environmental Notification Form, but not  
15 necessarily a full EIR.

16 In the case of this project, the South  
17 Coast Rail, it does require a mandatory environmental  
18 impact report. And, for example, some of the  
19 thresholds tripped would be more than one acre of  
20 alteration of bordering vegetative wetlands.  
21 Another mandatory area of threshold is 50 acres of  
22 land alteration.

23 What I also wanted to clarify, too, is  
24 that MEPA is not a permitting process. We don't



1 issue permits or approvals. Our process is really  
2 to allow public input, full disclosure of impacts,  
3 and analysis of alternatives and development of  
4 mitigation prior to projects going to the state  
5 permitting agency. And part of the process is to  
6 make sure that there's sufficient information pulled  
7 together for -- to help the state agency -- part of  
8 it is to help the state agencies to make their  
9 decisions but also to provide an opportunity for the  
10 public to have input as well.

11 Now, the DEIR is the primary mechanism  
12 for collecting that information, and let me -- I  
13 said that already. So that's a joint process. I'm  
14 repeating myself. Okay.

15 The other thing I wanted to mention was  
16 other relevant thresholds of this project are  
17 state -- you know, impacts to state-listed species  
18 and to areas of critical environmental concerns.  
19 There's a number of ACECs involved in the project  
20 area. The project is also subject to our Greenhouse  
21 Gas Emissions Policy, and just to mention some of  
22 the permits, the state permits involved, the project  
23 requires a variance from the Wetlands Protection  
24 Act, and also it requires a Conservation Management

1 Permit from the Natural Heritage and Endangered  
2 Species Program, because of rare species impacts.

3 And now, an Environmental Notification  
4 Form was filed a few years ago. Some of you may  
5 have commented on that. The certificate on that was  
6 issued April 3, 2009, and that laid out the scope of  
7 work for DOT in terms of developing the Draft  
8 Environmental Impact Report.

9 The -- as I mentioned, the draft DEIR  
10 has been filed now as a joint document. There's a  
11 60 -- normally we have a 30-day -- according to our  
12 regulations there's a 30-day public comment period;  
13 but in this case, the comment period was extended to  
14 be a 65-day comment period, and we coordinated with  
15 the Corps on the deadline for comments, which is  
16 May 27, 2011.

17 I also wanted to mention that comments  
18 to the state agency to MEPA should be submitted in  
19 writing.

20 So, you know, we're here to participate  
21 and to hear all your -- you know, the comments that  
22 you have to make as part of the Army Corps' hearing.  
23 We do require -- regulations do require that comments  
24 be submitted to the secretary in writing to be part

1 of the MEPA record.

2 After -- you know, after May 27th, when  
3 we get the comments, we will be issuing -- the  
4 secretary will issue a decision about a month later,  
5 which is at this point scheduled for June 29th, and  
6 at that point, we will be developing a scope of work  
7 for the final -- for the Final Environmental Impact  
8 Report. The secretary's certificate of the Draft  
9 EIR will determine whether or not the document is  
10 adequate in terms of meeting the requirements of the  
11 scope of work that were laid out in the previous  
12 certificate of 2009.

13 And we welcome all your comments on the  
14 document that's being -- that has been filed, any  
15 comments that you may have on the analysis, on the  
16 alternatives, on proposed mitigation, et cetera, and  
17 so we look forward to getting those comments from  
18 you.

19 Now, there's a -- I may be running out  
20 of time, so I'll just be quick with this. There's a  
21 similar process when we go through the final EIR.  
22 MEPA doesn't tend to have public meetings, except at  
23 the initial phase, but we will coordinate with the  
24 Corps to participate in any meetings they may have.



1           An important part here, too, in terms of  
2     submitting comments, they should be submitted to the  
3     Secretary, Richard Sullivan, to my attention, and as  
4     I mentioned, the information on submitting the  
5     comments is outside on the DOT's desk; and I know  
6     the flyers, the brochures that DOT have also have  
7     that information on the back.

8           I think that's it.

9           Thank you.

10          MR. ROSENBERG: The Corps of Engineers,  
11     yesterday's technology tomorrow.

12          (Laughter.)

13          MR. ROSENBERG: Okay. Ladies and  
14     gentlemen, it is crucial for this public process  
15     that your voice is heard, and we're here to listen,  
16     to listen to your comments, to understand your  
17     concerns, and to provide you an opportunity to put  
18     your thoughts on the record should you care to do so.

19          The hearing tonight will be conducted in  
20     a manner that all who desire to express their views  
21     will be given an opportunity to do so. To preserve  
22     the right of all to express their views, I ask that  
23     there be no interruptions, that all speakers abide  
24     by the time restrictions so that all who wish to

1 speak will have an opportunity. We do not wish to  
2 have one individual deny others the right to express  
3 their views or their concerns over the proposed  
4 project because of the time limitations we have.

5 Furthermore, in order to make any  
6 decisions regarding this permit application, we, the  
7 United States Army Corps of Engineers, need to have  
8 yourselves involved in this environmental review,  
9 not just tonight, but throughout the entire process.

10 When you came in copies of the public  
11 notice and the procedures to be followed at this  
12 hearing were available. If you did not receive  
13 these, both are available at the registration desk  
14 at the entrance to this hall. I will not read  
15 either the procedures or the public notice, but they  
16 will be entered into the record.

17  
18 \* \* \* \* \*

19 HEARING PROTOCOL

20  
21 1. Corps of Engineers hearings are conducted in  
22 accordance with Title 33, Code of Federal  
23 Regulations, Part 327. The most recent edition of  
24 these regulations was published in the November 13,

1 1986, Federal Register which is available at most  
2 libraries.

3  
4 2. Either the District Engineer or the Deputy  
5 District Engineer (the two top ranking officials at  
6 the New England District) normally serve as the  
7 presiding officer at the hearing. When neither of  
8 them is available to serve, the District Engineer  
9 may designate another presiding officer.

10  
11 3. The District Counsel or his designee serves as  
12 the legal advisor to the presiding officer to advise  
13 him on legal matters that may arise. The Chief,  
14 Public Affairs or his designee serves as the  
15 presiding officer's advisor on all aspects of  
16 communication, media relations, local/regional  
17 public involvement and interaction, and community  
18 relations.

19  
20 4. Any person may appear at the hearing on his own  
21 behalf or may be represented by counsel or by  
22 another representative.

23  
24 5. Hearings will be conducted orderly, but



1 expeditiously, by the presiding officer or hearing  
2 moderator/facilitator.

3  
4 6. After the opening remarks by the presiding  
5 officer, time may be allowed for presentations  
6 describing the proposed project.

7  
8 7. After the presentations, elected and appointed  
9 officials will be given an opportunity to present  
10 their official comments regarding the proposed  
11 project.

12  
13 8. The general public will then have an opportunity  
14 to make oral statements, present written statements,  
15 make oral presentations and make recommendations as  
16 to any appropriate decision. Cross-examination will  
17 not be allowed. All questions will be directed to  
18 the presiding officer for the record. The hearing  
19 will continue until everyone (who has requested) has  
20 had a chance to speak. Exceptions to this protocol  
21 will be decided by the moderator.

22  
23 9. All comments, written and oral, receive equal  
24 consideration (lengthy written statements should be

1 summarized orally and the entire written statement  
2 submitted for the record).

3  
4 10. The presiding officer may establish reasonable  
5 time limits for (all) individual comments in order  
6 to ensure all who have requested will have an  
7 opportunity to speak on the record.

8  
9 11. The hearing file will remain open for a period  
10 to be determined by the presiding officer from the  
11 date of the hearing for the submission of additional  
12 statements.

13  
14 12. The presiding officer shall have the power to  
15 recess or suspend the hearing and, at the presiding  
16 officer's discretion, reconvene it at a later date.

17  
18 13. A transcript of the hearing will be prepared.  
19 Copies may be purchased from the hearing reporter of  
20 the Corps of Engineers. A copy will be available  
21 for inspection at the New England District  
22 headquarters in Concord, Massachusetts.

23  
24 \* \* \* \* \*

PUBLIC NOTICE

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers®

New England District

696 Virginia Road

Concord, MA 01742-2751

Comment Period Begins: March 23, 2011

Comment Period Ends: May 27, 2011

File Number: NAE-2007-00698

In Reply Refer To: Alan Anacheke-Nasemann

Phone: (978) 318-8214

E-mail: [SCREIS@usace.army.mil](mailto:SCREIS@usace.army.mil)

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Department of the Army Permit Application, Notice of  
Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
and Announcement of Public Hearings: Proposed South  
Coast Rail Project, Massachusetts Department of  
Transportation.

The District Engineer has received a permit  
application from the applicant below to conduct work  
in waters of the United States as described below.



1  
2 **APPLICANT:** Massachusetts Department of Transportation,  
3 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02116  
4

5 **ACTIVITY:** Discharge fill material into waters of the  
6 United States, including adjacent wetlands. All  
7 work is incidental to installation of transportation  
8 infrastructure (rail and/or road grades) for  
9 proposed commuter passenger public transportation  
10 service. A detailed description of the proposed  
11 activity is provided below. This work is proposed  
12 in waters of the United States, including adjacent  
13 wetlands, along existing active or abandoned  
14 railroad, new track on lands currently not used as a  
15 transportation corridor, and/or highway grades  
16 between Boston and the Cities of New Bedford and  
17 Fall River, Massachusetts.  
18

19 **AUTHORITY**

20 Permits are required pursuant to:

21 \_\_\_\_Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899

22 XXSection 404 of the Clean Water Act

23 \_\_\_\_Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research  
24 and Sanctuaries Act).

1  
2 The New England District, U.S. Army Corps of  
3 Engineers (Corps) has prepared a Draft Environmental  
4 Impact Statement (DEIS) to evaluate the proposed  
5 establishment of commuter passenger transit service  
6 between Boston and the cities of New Bedford and  
7 Fall River, MA. The DEIS has been prepared pursuant  
8 to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental  
9 Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the  
10 Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR  
11 parts 1500-1508), in response to this Department of  
12 the Army permit application.

13  
14 The DEIS has also been prepared to serve as a Draft  
15 Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to satisfy the  
16 requirements of the Massachusetts Environmental  
17 Policy Act (MEPA; 301 CMR 11.00 et seq.). The MEPA  
18 review is being conducted simultaneously with the  
19 NEPA process.

20  
21 The joint DEIS/DEIR evaluated a range of alternative  
22 transportation routes. Alternative routes evaluated  
23 in detail included three principal rail routes and  
24 one bus route: (1) the "Attleboro Alternative," (2)

1 the "Stoughton Alternative," (3) the "Whittenton  
2 Alternative," and (4) the "Rapid Bus" Alternative.  
3 A No Build/Transportation Surface Management  
4 alternative was also evaluated. Additional  
5 permutations, including a "Middleborough Rail -  
6 Rapid Bus Hybrid" and an "Attleboro Fourth Track"  
7 configuration were also examined.

8  
9 **Two Public Hearings will be held, as follows:**

- 10  
11 1. Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 7:00 P.M., Qualters  
12 Middle School, 240 East Street, Mansfield, MA  
13 2. Thursday, May 5, 2011, 7:00 P.M., Keith Middle  
14 School, 225 Hathaway Blvd, New Bedford, MA  
15

16 **Registration for each hearing will begin at**  
17 **6:00 P.M. on the dates and locations listed above.**  
18

19 In order to properly evaluate the proposal, we are  
20 seeking public comment. Anyone wishing to comment  
21 is encouraged to attend one of the hearings noted  
22 above or submit written comments. **Written comments**  
23 **must be received no later than: Friday May 27, 2011.**

24 Written comments can be sent to Mr. Alan



1 Anacheka-Nasemann, Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps  
2 of Engineers, New England District, Regulatory  
3 Division, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA, or by  
4 email to: SCREIS@usace.army.mil. Written comments  
5 may also be turned in to Corps staff during the  
6 public hearings noted above. All comments will be  
7 considered a matter of public record. Copies of all  
8 comments will be forwarded to the applicant.

9  
10 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Alan  
11 Anacheka-Nasemann, (978) 318-8214, email:  
12 SCREIS@usace.army.mil.

13  
14 **Background.** Section 404 of the Clean Water Act  
15 requires a Department of the Army (DA) permit for  
16 the discharge of dredged or fill material into  
17 waters of the United States, including adjacent  
18 wetlands. MassDOT has submitted an application for  
19 a DA permit to discharge fill material into waters  
20 of the U.S. incidental to establishment of commuter  
21 public transportation service between Boston and the  
22 cities of New Bedford and Fall River, MA, and known  
23 as "South Coast Rail." Impacts to waters of the  
24 U.S. would range in area from approximately 10.3

1 acres to approximately 21.5 acres, depending on the  
2 alternative selected. The overall project purpose  
3 is to more fully meet the existing and future demand  
4 for public transportation between Fall River/New  
5 Bedford and Boston, MA and to enhance regional  
6 mobility. The cities of New Bedford, Fall River and  
7 Taunton, Massachusetts are reportedly the only  
8 cities within 50 miles of Boston not currently  
9 served by commuter passenger rail service. The  
10 project envisions up to approximately 9600 passenger  
11 daily trips between Boston and New Bedford/Fall River.

12  
13 The DEIS is intended to provide the information  
14 needed for the Corps to perform a public interest  
15 review for the Section 404 permit decision.

16 Evaluation of impacts of the various alternatives  
17 will include application of the guidelines of  
18 Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act. Issues  
19 analyzed in the DEIS include impacts to water of the  
20 U.S. (including vernal pools and other wetlands);  
21 transportation, land use; socioeconomics,  
22 environmental justice, visual effects, noise,  
23 vibration, cultural resources; air quality; open  
24 space; farmland, hazardous materials, biodiversity;

1 threatened and endangered species; and water  
2 resources. Several alternatives were evaluated for  
3 comparative purposes, including the No Action  
4 Alternative under which no new transportation would  
5 be built.

6  
7 **Alternatives.** The "Attleboro Alternative" would add  
8 new service via the existing AMTRAK® Northeast  
9 Corridor, with added capacity, new track and  
10 existing freight lines, from Boston via Attleboro  
11 and Norton to Taunton. The new track ("Attleboro  
12 bypass") would be laid in the Town of Attleboro,  
13 near Chartley Pond in the vicinity of an existing  
14 National Grid electrical line right-of-way. This  
15 alternative would add approximately 20 new trains to  
16 the existing Northeast Corridor between Attleboro  
17 and Boston. Eight new commuter rail stations would  
18 be constructed (Barrowsville, Downtown Taunton,  
19 Taunton Depot, King's Highway, Whale's Tooth,  
20 Freetown, Fall River Depot, and Battleship Cove) and  
21 major reconstruction would occur at three existing  
22 commuter rail stations (Canton Junction, Sharon,  
23 Mansfield).



1 The "Stoughton Alternative" would extend the  
2 existing Stoughton commuter rail line from its  
3 current terminus in Stoughton along presently  
4 abandoned railroad rights-of-way through Easton and  
5 Raynham to Taunton. This would follow an existing,  
6 abandoned railroad grade that crosses Hockomock  
7 Swamp and Pine Swamp to the east side of Taunton.  
8 This alternative would add 4 new trains and would  
9 otherwise extend existing trains farther south from  
10 Stoughton to New Bedford and Fall River. Ten new  
11 commuter rail stations would be constructed (North  
12 Easton, Easton Village, Raynham Place, Taunton,  
13 Taunton Depot, King's Highway, Whale's Tooth,  
14 Freetown, Fall River Depot, and Battleship Cove) and  
15 major reconstruction would occur at two existing  
16 commuter rail stations (Canton Center and  
17 Stoughton).

18  
19 The "Whittenton Alternative" is a variant of the  
20 Stoughton Alternative, and would extend the existing  
21 Stoughton commuter rail line from its current  
22 terminus in Stoughton along presently abandoned  
23 railroad rights-of-way through Easton and Raynham to  
24 Taunton. This would follow the existing, abandoned

1 railroad grade that crosses Hockomock Swamp and then  
2 an abandoned, serpentine (winding) railroad grade to  
3 the west side of Taunton. This alternative would  
4 add 4 new trains and would otherwise extend existing  
5 trains farther south from Stoughton to New Bedford  
6 and Fall River. Ten new commuter rail stations  
7 would be constructed (North Easton, Easton Village,  
8 Raynham Place, Downtown Taunton, Taunton Depot,  
9 King's Highway, Whale's Tooth, Freetown, Fall River  
10 Depot, and Battleship Cove) and major reconstruction  
11 would occur at two existing commuter rail stations  
12 (Canton Center and Stoughton). The Whittenton  
13 Alternative was the most recent route for passenger  
14 rail service between Stoughton and Taunton, last  
15 used in ca. 1958.

16  
17 Continuation of all three rail alternatives from  
18 Taunton would follow existing, active freight lines  
19 through Lakeville and Freetown to New Bedford and  
20 Fall River. These links between Taunton and New  
21 Bedford/Fall River are common to all three rail  
22 alternatives identified above.

23  
24 The "Rapid Bus" Alternative would provide commuter

1 bus service, in lieu of rail, from New Bedford, Fall  
2 River and Taunton to South Station via I-93, Route 24,  
3 and Route 140. North of I-495, buses would use a  
4 combination of new zipper bus lanes, new reversible  
5 bus lanes, two-way bus lanes, existing zipper HOV  
6 lanes and existing HOV lanes, along with a short  
7 section in mixed traffic. South of the I-495  
8 interchange in Raynham, buses would travel in the  
9 general purpose lanes with mixed traffic. Bus  
10 Stations would be located at Whale's Tooth and  
11 King's Highway in New Bedford, and in Fall River,  
12 Freetown, Downtown Taunton and Galleria (Taunton).

13  
14 The approximate locations of the proposed build  
15 alternative transportation alignments and rail  
16 station locations are shown on the enclosed plan  
17 entitled "Figure 4.15-11: South Coast Rail Project  
18 Alternative Alignments," and details of the proposed  
19 impacts to waters of the United States are identified  
20 in the DEIS/DEIR, Chapter 4.16 (Wetlands).

21  
22 The No-Build Alternative would provide enhancements  
23 to existing bus services with limited improvements  
24 to the existing transit and roadway system, but



1 otherwise no major infrastructure improvements.

2  
3 The decision whether to issue a permit will be based  
4 on an evaluation of the probable impact of the  
5 proposed activity on the public interest. That  
6 decision will reflect the national concern for both  
7 protection and utilization of important resources.  
8 The benefit which may reasonably accrue from the  
9 proposal must be balanced against its reasonably  
10 foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be  
11 relevant to the proposal will be considered,  
12 including the cumulative effects thereof; among  
13 those are: conservation, economics, aesthetics,  
14 general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural  
15 value, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards,  
16 flood plain value, land use, navigation, shoreline  
17 erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and  
18 conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety,  
19 food production and, in general, the needs and  
20 welfare of the people.

21  
22 The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from  
23 the public; federal, state, and local agencies and  
24 officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested

1 parties in order to consider and evaluate the  
2 impacts of this proposed activity. Comments  
3 received will be addressed in the Final  
4 Environmental Impact Statement and considered by the  
5 Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue,  
6 modify, condition or deny a permit for this  
7 proposal. Comments are used to assess impacts on  
8 endangered species, historic properties, water  
9 quality, general environmental effects, and the  
10 other public interest factors listed above.

11  
12 **Mitigation:** Implementation of a mitigation plan to  
13 compensate for unavoidable losses to aquatic  
14 resource functions will be required if a permit is  
15 issued. The DEIS/DEIR provides a conceptual outline  
16 of MassDOT's proposed mitigation program; however  
17 specific mitigation measures have not been  
18 identified at this point.

19  
20 **Section 106 Coordination:** All of the proposed  
21 alternative routes would affect historic and  
22 cultural resources, including properties eligible  
23 for listing on the National Register of Historic  
24 Places, National Historic Landmarks, and historic

1 districts that have cultural importance in the  
2 affected communities. Consultation with the State  
3 and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices on the  
4 extent of the impacts on these resources is ongoing  
5 as part of the NEPA and §404 review processes,  
6 pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic  
7 Preservation Act, as amended.

8  
9 **Endangered Species Consultation:** The New England  
10 District, Army Corps of Engineers has reviewed the  
11 list of species protected under the Endangered  
12 Species Act of 1973, as amended, which might occur  
13 at the project site. It is our preliminary  
14 determination that the proposed activity for which  
15 authorization is being sought is designed, situated  
16 or will be operated/used in such a manner that it is  
17 not likely to adversely affect any federally listed  
18 endangered or threatened species or their designated  
19 critical habitat. By this Public Notice, we are  
20 requesting that the appropriate Federal Agency  
21 concur with our determination.

22  
23 **Coastal Zone Management Act:** The State of  
24 Massachusetts has an approved Coastal Zone



1 Management Program. Where applicable the applicant  
2 states that any proposed activity will comply with  
3 and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent  
4 with the approved Coastal Zone Management Program.  
5 By this Public Notice, we are requesting the State's  
6 concurrence or objection to the applicant's  
7 consistency statement.

8  
9 **Availability of the DEIS/DEIR:** Interested parties  
10 may view and download the DEIS/DEIR online at:  
11 [http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm)  
12 [SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm). A printed copy  
13 of the document is also available to review at each  
14 of the following locations:

- 15  
16 1. State Transportation Library of Massachusetts  
17 10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA
- 18 2. Russell Memorial Library, 88 Main Street,  
19 Acushnet, MA
- 20 3. Attleboro Public Library, 74 North Main, Attleboro,  
21 MA
- 22 4. Berkley Public Library, 3 North Main Street,  
23 Berkley, MA
- 24 5. Boston Public Library, Central Library,

- 1        700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA
- 2        6. Thayer Public Library, 798 Washington Street,
- 3        Braintree, MA
- 4        7. Canton Public Library, 786 Washington Street,
- 5        Canton, MA
- 6        8. Dedham Public Library, 43 Church Street, Dedham, MA
- 7        9. Ames Free Library, 15 Barrows Street, North
- 8        Easton, MA
- 9        10. Fall River Public Library, 104 North Main
- 10       Street, Fall River, MA
- 11       11. Boyden Library, 10 Bird Street, Foxborough, MA
- 12       12. James White Memorial Library, 5 Washburn Rd.
- 13       East Freetown, MA
- 14       13. Lakeville Public Library, 4 Precinct Street,
- 15       Lakeville, MA
- 16       14. Mansfield Public Library, 255 Hope Street,
- 17       Mansfield, MA
- 18       15. Milton Public Library, 476 Canton Avenue,
- 19       Milton, MA
- 20       16. New Bedford Free Public Library, 613 Pleasant
- 21       Street, New Bedford, MA
- 22       17. Norton Public Library, 68 East Main Street,
- 23       Norton, MA
- 24       18. Thomas Crane Public Library, 40 Washington

Street, Quincy, MA

19. Turner Free Library, 2 North Main Street

Randolph, MA

20. Raynham Public Library, 760 South Main Street,

Raynham, MA

21. Sharon Public Library, 11 North Main Street,

Sharon, MA

22. Stoughton Library, 84 Park Street, Stoughton, MA

23. Taunton Public Library, 12 Pleasant Street,

Taunton, MA

24. West Bridgewater Public Library, 80 Howard

Street, West Bridgewater, MA

The following authorizations have been applied for,  
or have been, or will be obtained:

(X) Permit, License or Assent from State.

(X) Permit from Local Wetland Agency or  
Conservation Commission.

(X) Water Quality Certification in  
accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

**THIS NOTICE IS NOT AN AUTHORIZATION TO DO ANY WORK.**



1 Jennifer L. McCarthy  
2 Chief, Regulatory Division

3 \* \* \* \* \*

4  
5 MR. ROSENBERG: A transcript of this  
6 hearing will be prepared, and that record will  
7 remain open, and written comments may be submitted  
8 tonight or by mail, up until May 27th, including May  
9 27th.

10 All comments receive equal consideration.  
11 Anyone who wishes to send written comments should  
12 forward those comments to our headquarters in  
13 Concord, Massachusetts.

14 Lastly, I'd like to reemphasize that the  
15 Corps of Engineers has made no decision with regard  
16 to this permit. It is our responsibility to fully  
17 evaluate the Massachusetts DOT's proposed activity  
18 and its impacts to the aquatic resources prior to  
19 any decision, and in order to accomplish that, we  
20 need you.

21 Please note that the Corps does not have  
22 a preferred alternative and has not yet selected a  
23 permissible transportation route at this time. The  
24 Corps must first identify the least environmentally

1       damaging practicable alternative, and we'll move on  
2       from there. The process will not be completed until  
3       the Final Environmental Impact Statement is released  
4       and the record of decision is published.

5               Now although the Massachusetts Department  
6       of Transportation has an ambitious schedule for the  
7       completion of the necessary environmental reviews  
8       and permitting, the Army Corps of Engineers has not  
9       developed the schedule for the preparation of the  
10      Final Environmental Impact Statement. The timing of  
11      the Final Environmental Impact Statement and our  
12      Record of Decision are contingent upon the public  
13      comments we received and the data gaps that we need  
14      to fill. Again, we are here to receive your comments,  
15      not to enter into the discussion but to receive  
16      those comments.

17              And any questions you have should be  
18      directed to the record and not to the individuals on  
19      this panel.

20              So if there's no objection, I will now  
21      dispense with the reading of the public notice of  
22      the hearing and have it entered into the record.

23              LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWELL: (Nods.)

24              MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

1           A transcript of this hearing is being  
2       made to ensure a detailed review of all the comments.  
3       A copy of the transcript will be available at our  
4       Concord, Massachusetts headquarters for your review,  
5       on our website for your use, or you may make  
6       arrangements with the stenographer for a copy at  
7       your own expense.

8           Individuals speaking today will be  
9       called to the microphone in the order they signed in  
10      and have provided for in our hearing protocol that  
11      was also distributed in the hearing area -- in the  
12      reception area.

13          When making a statement, please come  
14      forward to one of the microphones on either side.  
15      State your name and any interest you represent. As  
16      there are many here to provide comment, you will be  
17      provided, as I said earlier, three minutes to speak,  
18      no more. Once again, please keep to this time  
19      restriction so we avoid denying others the right to  
20      speak.

21          This traffic signal behind me will  
22      indicate the following: When that green light comes  
23      on, you will have two minutes remaining; when the  
24      amber light comes on, you will have one minute left;



1 and, of course, when the red light comes on, that  
2 indicates your time has expired.

3 Please identify if you're speaking for  
4 or representing the position of an organization. If  
5 you're speaking for yourself, just say so.

6 I want to emphasize lastly that all who  
7 wish to speak will have that opportunity to do so.  
8 And once again, we have an additional stenographer  
9 located outside the hearing room, should you wish to  
10 dictate an individual statement for the record.  
11 There are no time limitations on giving statements  
12 to the other stenographer.

13 We will now receive your comments  
14 according to our hearing protocols.

15 Our first speaker will be Stephen  
16 Castellina, and he will be followed by Brad Washburn.

17 STEPHEN CASTELLINA: Thank you very  
18 much. Can everybody hear me? Good.

19 My name's Stephen Castellina. I'm  
20 Chairman of the Board of Selectmen from Berkley,  
21 Massachusetts. The Town of Berkley is a rural town,  
22 a nice quiet town at this point so far. We're south  
23 of Raynham, in the section of 140 and Route 24.

24 I'm here to talk about the quality of

1 life in Berkley and try to protect the environment  
2 and also the quality of life in Berkley.

3 We're concerned -- I'm concerned -- we're  
4 concerned, the Board of Selectmen, with what the  
5 train will do to Berkley, with the noise, smoke,  
6 vibration and also the pollutants from the trains.

H-001.01

7 We are concerned about the effects to  
8 the environment, specifically on our drinking water  
9 that comes out of all private wells. We don't have  
10 public drinking water, and also we're concerned  
11 about the effects on animals and on our wetlands.  
12 We, in Berkley as well as residents request that any  
13 replication -- replication or wetland restoration be  
14 within the Town of Berkley and not elsewhere.

H-001.02

15 We support our fellow towns in opposition  
16 to commuter rail trains through our towns. We  
17 support the Towns of Stoughton, Raynham, and  
18 especially the town which is most environmentally  
19 affected, the Town of Easton.

H-001.03

20 In my opinion, the argument for equality  
21 of rail service between Boston and all cities within  
22 60 miles of Boston is bogus. Money would be better  
23 spent on some less -- on such things as bus  
24 improvement or no action; and the rest of the money

H-001.04

1       that you spend -- that you would spend with no  
2       action or with bus improvement should be spent on  
3       bringing businesses to Southeastern Massachusetts,  
4       and then people won't have to travel to Boston.

H-001.04

5               We also feel that if -- if this train  
6       goes through, that people just -- if any people are  
7       taken off the roads by train, what's going to happen  
8       is it will free up 24 a little bit more, and it will  
9       be just as crowded as it is today.

H-001.05

10              I noticed one thing about the bus slide  
11       that was shown by the MBTA, they told about the  
12       price of the bus, but underneath it when they said  
13       trains, they didn't say the cost of trains, which  
14       is -- which is, you know, more than double the price  
15       of the bus.

H-001.06

16              We'd also like to consider the fact that  
17       more people work from home nowadays and more people  
18       will continue to do this in the future, and there  
19       might be no need at all to go to Boston.

H-001.07

20              We'd like to have -- as I said before,  
21       we'd like the money spent on bringing business to  
22       Southeast Massachusetts, and that will also decrease  
23       the amount of traffic and need people in cars.

H-001.08

24              Otherwise, when they talk about the

H-001.09



1 equality for New Bedford and Fall River, the other  
2 lines don't disrupt and go through environmentally  
3 sensitive areas like the Hockomock Swamp. As  
4 Ms. Egan said, all wetlands are not equal, and we  
5 want the Army Corps of Engineers to consider that.  
6 Trestles and these things you're talking about seems  
7 like it's going to make quite an impact to that  
8 environmentally sensitive area, which is unique to  
9 Massachusetts.

10 I leave you with one other -- one word  
11 that I think -- this is my personal opinion about  
12 this whole thing. It's a boondoggle. That's what  
13 it is. It may be a better description than  
14 boondoggle, this is a \$2 billion boondoggle. I know  
15 the Corps of Engineers probably doesn't particularly  
16 care how much it costs, but, please, do what you can  
17 as Army Corps of Engineers to -- to either look at  
18 the bus alternative, spend a little bit of money; it  
19 may take a few cars off the road or do a no  
20 alternative.

21 Thank you very much.

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Our

H-001.09

H-001.10

1 next speaker is Brad Washburn, and he will be  
2 followed by Shaunna O'Connell.

3 BRAD WASHBURN: Hi. Thank you.

4 My name is Brad Washburn. I'm the  
5 Planning Director for the Town of Easton. I'll make  
6 my comments brief because the town is planning on  
7 submitting a more detailed comment letter within the  
8 time frame of the public comment period, and also  
9 tonight the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for  
10 the Town of Easton will be here as well providing  
11 comments on the project.

12 Historically, the town has not supported  
13 the Stoughton Alternative. The town is concerned  
14 with the impacts associated with the project.

15 The DEIS states that you will develop  
16 more specific mitigation measures during the final  
17 design process for the LEDPA, and the town will  
18 therefore request more specificity regarding -- I'm  
19 sorry -- regarding the proposed mitigation  
20 commitments for noted impacts to residential  
21 properties adjacent to the right-of-way. Impacts to  
22 historic districts and properties, particularly  
23 those in North Easton Village, impacts to wetland  
24 resource areas, namely, in the Hockomock Swamp,

H-002.01

1 traffic-related impacts, and public safety impacts,  
2 including but not limited to grade crossings and the  
3 town's water supply.

H-002.01

4 I do have a couple of questions I know  
5 you can't answer, but just want to pose them for the  
6 record. Basically when -- when will the more  
7 specific mitigation measures be presented to the  
8 public, and in what level of coordination or public  
9 input does this process include? Will there be  
10 opportunities for the public to comment on things  
11 such as station design, traffic improvement projects,  
12 locations of sound barriers and ballast mats? I'm  
13 assuming it will be during project permitting, but  
14 I'm wondering if that's during the final EIS/EIR  
15 process.

H-002.02

16 Lastly, in terms of the public comment  
17 period for the project, the town did submit a  
18 request to extend the public comment period. My  
19 understanding is that the federal comment period or  
20 the -- the Army Corps of Engineers can accept  
21 comments right up until the issuance of the permit,  
22 but I think the MEPA process is the constraining  
23 factor here; but, again, it's my understanding that  
24 the secretary of the EPA can extend the public

H-002.03



1 comment period beyond what is stipulated in the MEPA  
2 regs.

3 So, again, that's -- that's all the  
4 comments for me, but the town will be submitting a  
5 more detailed comment letter prior to the close of  
6 the public comment period.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker is  
11 Shaunna O'Connell, followed by Colleen Corona.

12 SHAUNNA O'CONNELL: Okay. Thank you  
13 very much for holding this hearing in the first  
14 place, and for allowing us all the opportunity to  
15 speak.

16 As the representative for the City of  
17 Taunton, I'm here to testify on behalf of the city's  
18 best interest regarding a rail project. We are  
19 pleased that the route preferred by the Mass. DOT is  
20 the Stoughton route, as this is also the preferred  
21 route of the City of Taunton. We do not support any  
22 other route for the South Coast Rail.

23 We do not support the Whittenton route,  
24 as this will result in 14 grade crossings throughout

1 our city, in a very densely populated area, and they  
2 are very close together, and that will be a disaster  
3 for our traffic flow. It will also cause public  
4 safety threats through obviously the potential for  
5 emergency vehicles being delayed at those stops.

6 This is the most -- the Stoughton route  
7 is the most direct route from Boston to the  
8 communities on the South Coast, and it is also the  
9 least disruptive through our city as it only crosses  
10 over five street grades.

11 The city has already acquired property  
12 on Arlington Street that abuts the site of the  
13 proposed downtown station, and we understand that  
14 the state is going to examine our ability to support  
15 a train station there. It is anticipated that the  
16 state would assist the city in making improvements  
17 around the Dean Street/Arlington Street intersections

18 Our community is excited to be part of  
19 the enhanced rail service in Southeastern  
20 Massachusetts, and they do look forward to the  
21 economic benefits the South Coast Rail may bring as  
22 we seek to revitalize the economy and the communities  
23 in this region.

24 If the project does indeed continue to

H-003.02

H-003.03

1 go forward, the City of Taunton looks forward to  
2 working closely with Mass. DOT throughout the  
3 proposed rail project to ensure the best results for  
4 our city and for the state.

5 Thank you very much.

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

7 Our next speaker, Colleen Corona, who  
8 will be followed by Charles Crowley.

9 COLLEEN CORONA: Thank you very much.  
10 My name is Colleen Corona. I'm the Chairman of the  
11 Board of Selectmen for the Town of Easton.

12 I'd like to go on record as stating that  
13 the Town of Easton does not support the Stoughton  
14 Alternative. We have many significant concerns.  
15 First of all, we feel that the environmental impacts  
16 are significant, particularly to the Hockomock Swamp.

17 Easton is a town that relies solely on  
18 wells for their water, and a train is scheduled to  
19 pass by several of those wells, one in very close  
20 proximity to the wells, so we have significant  
21 concerns about our drinking water.

22 We have public safety concerns, as every  
23 community has, that the train's going to pass  
24 through. We're also concerned about our historic

H-004.01

H-004.02

H-004.03



1 resources. North Easton and South Easton have  
2 significant historic resources, and particularly in  
3 North Easton, the train will pass very, very close  
4 to those historic resources and also through several  
5 densely populated areas.

H-004.03

6 And lastly, I'd like to -- just like to  
7 reiterate that the Hockomock Swamp is an area of  
8 critical importance, and I'd like to reiterate our  
9 concern about the train passing through that and  
10 once again state that we do not support the  
11 Stoughton Alternative.

H-004.04

12 Thank you very much.

13 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Charles  
16 Crowley, who will be followed by Frank Cook.

17 CHARLES CROWLEY: Thank you very much.

18 My name is Charles Crowley. I'm the  
19 Mayor of the City of Taunton, and I'm very  
20 enthusiastically in support of rail service coming  
21 to the South Coast region, and I am very much in  
22 favor of the direct Stoughton route.

H-005.01

23 It is the most economical way to get to  
24 Boston, to Fall River. Everyone keeps talking about

1 what it means for us to be able to get to Boston,  
2 but I think we have qualities in the South Coast  
3 region to make people from Boston want to come here.

H-005.01

4 But the south -- the direct Stoughton  
5 route is something where it goes through the  
6 Hockomock Swamp. It's been doing that. The rail  
7 service was established through there about  
8 170 years ago, and we had far more detrimental  
9 locomotives going through the Hockomock Swamp during  
10 that period of time causing much more havoc; yet,  
11 the Hockomock Swamp is thriving. We're going to  
12 have much more economically friendly engines that  
13 are going to be going through that area.

H-005.02

14 And I think having that direct route  
15 coming down to Taunton, by the stations that already  
16 were in Easton and in Raynham, and the Dean Street  
17 station is the downtown station for Taunton. It's  
18 a -- one of two transit-oriented districts that  
19 we're created to try to enhance the economic  
20 opportunities around that corridor that lead to  
21 the -- to the development of this project.

H-005.03

22 The Whittenton Alternative we're very  
23 much opposed to that. The community has gone on  
24 record many times, and it has 14 grade crossings.

H-005.04

1 It will devastate the downtown area as will the  
2 Attleboro route because they cross through our  
3 downtown area, and the streets are so close together  
4 that one particular train could really block off  
5 many of the public safety vehicles that would  
6 interact and bring safety to our community, the way  
7 we're all spread out, 50 square miles. It's very,  
8 very difficult for -- should that train dissect the  
9 city in that area.

H-005.04

10 There's 14 grade crossings. The direct  
11 Stoughton route has only five at grade crossings.  
12 The Attleboro route cuts through what is the area  
13 of -- the three-mile river area of critical  
14 environmental concern that was established several  
15 years ago. So in order to do that, you're cutting  
16 through an environmentally friendly area that has 15  
17 grade crossings that will dissect the city.

H-005.05

18 We have been a railroad center for years.  
19 We've had ten railroad stations all operating at the  
20 same time. So it's something we welcome, Taunton  
21 being the gateway to the South Coast, and we applaud  
22 those who supported the direct Stoughton route  
23 because that is the way we can once again have a  
24 rail service, return rail service to Southeastern

H-005.06



1 Massachusetts, and that's the best way to go.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
6 Frank Cook, who will be followed by Christine  
7 Santoro.

8 FRANK COOK: Good evening. My name is  
9 Frank Cook. I'm the president of the Attleboro City  
10 Council.

11 I want to thank the Army Corps of  
12 Engineers for conducting this hearing tonight.

13 I and other members of the City Council  
14 have appeared at previous hearings involving this  
15 project, for example, a few years ago at Norton, and  
16 I just wanted to reiterate the concerns that have  
17 been raised in the past regarding the Attleboro  
18 Alternative still remain of paramount concern to us.

H-006.01

19 This evening, although the focus of our  
20 meeting tonight is on the environmental impact, I  
21 also want to mention some of the safety concerns  
22 shared by the -- the City of Attleboro has.

H-006.02

23 The Attleboro Alternative would result  
24 in grade crossings over some of the key roads,

1 including Route 123 and other roads that are the  
2 major route to Sturdy Memorial Hospital for  
3 ambulances, for example.

H-006.02

4 Not to mention a lot of these trains  
5 going through at a time when school children, school  
6 buses would be on the roads and using some of  
7 those -- some of those same roads at this point.

8 As is noted during the presentation  
9 earlier this evening, the Attleboro Alternative  
10 would have the greatest combined environmental  
11 impact, and some of the concerns that we have in the  
12 past, and these concerns we still have, are items  
13 such as noise, vibrations. Mayor Crowley just  
14 mentioned the concerns that we share also with  
15 regard to the impact on the wetlands.

H-006.03

16 In terms of the noise and vibrations,  
17 since Acela began operating through there, we not  
18 only have more trains, but there's also for those  
19 who are living in the -- along or adjacent to that  
20 track area, a tremendous increase in the amount of  
21 noise and also in the amount of vibration. So we're  
22 very concerned about the potential environmental  
23 impact of a project of this nature.

24 So, again -- again, we continue to be in

H-006.04

1 opposition to the Attleboro Alternative. I'm glad  
2 to see some of the cost findings that are coming out  
3 tonight as well as some of the environmental  
4 comments that were made to indicate that this is not  
5 a good choice and would urge the Corps to look very  
6 carefully at this.

7 And, again, in terms of the Attleboro  
8 Alternative, this does not seem to be the best  
9 impact on the environment or making the environment  
10 any better.

11 I do want to thank you for the time.  
12 Again, just to reiterate, Attleboro continues to be  
13 in opposition to the Attleboro Alternative.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

16 Our next speaker is Christine Santoro,  
17 followed by Melanie-Jane Deware.

18 CHRISTINE SANTORO: Good evening. My  
19 name is Christine Santoro. I'm a resident of  
20 Easton, and I am the Chairman of the Planning and  
21 Zoning Board, and I thank you for this opportunity  
22 to speak with you.

23 As planners, we deal with present effects  
24 of development as well as future and long-term

H-006.04

H-007.01



1 effects of development, and although we recognize  
2 the positive impacts of the railroad being  
3 extension -- being extended, there are also negative  
4 impacts that require mitigation, and our concern as  
5 planners is that we will need mitigation for  
6 the early present development, but also in the  
7 future because the train will have future impacts  
8 through the years. So when we think about mitigation,  
9 I would like things to be considered as both present  
10 and future mitigation.

H-007.01

11 Mitigation must directly alleviate some  
12 of the negative impacts, not just environmental  
13 as -- and as with water or the species involved but  
14 also the historic buildings, as has been mentioned  
15 before, with the train passing through over time,  
16 those buildings will be affected, and down the road  
17 we will need mitigation to restore those buildings.

18 There are many beautiful historic  
19 buildings in Easton. We have a very tiny village  
20 area and many homes near there, and not only will we  
21 need sound barriers and trees to protect the homes  
22 now but also in the future.

H-007.02

23 We're talking about a 100-year plan here.  
24 We need mitigation that takes that into consideration.

1                   So the rail will have a continuing  
2                   impact, and I think that in planning for this, we  
3                   need mitigation that will continually meet the needs  
4                   of those impacts and implications into the future.

5                   Thank you.

6                   MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

7                   (Applause.)

8                   MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker,  
9                   Melanie-Jane Deware, who will be followed by James  
10                  Watson.

11                 MELANIE-JANE DEWARE: I'm Melanie  
12                 Deware. I'm the Chairman of the Easton Historical  
13                 Commission, and I understand that a lot of the  
14                 concerns tonight deal with environment, but I'm  
15                 speaking from a historical perspective for the most  
16                 part.

17                 The Easton Historical Commission is very  
18                 much in opposition to the proposed commuter rail  
19                 service that will go through our town for many  
20                 reasons, including its negative impact on historic  
21                 districts and sites.

22                 The proposed route will bisect the North  
23                 Easton Village National Registry District, the  
24                 Richardson National Landmark District and the Ames

H-007.03

H-008.01

1 local historic district. Its proximity to these  
2 districts as well as their associated buildings will  
3 cause irreparable harm to them.

H-008.01

4 The project is ill-conceived on many  
5 levels, and we feel that history cannot be mitigated.

6 The proposed increase in revenue to  
7 local towns will not happen. How many people south  
8 of Raynham really commute to Boston daily. The  
9 Taunton bus that transported folks from Fall River  
10 to Boston was canceled due to lack of ridership.

11 Do people from Fall River and New  
12 Bedford want to commute an hour and a half each way  
13 every day to go to work? A 2009 report based on  
14 federal census data showed that only 1.4 percent of  
15 the Fall River workforce takes public transportation  
16 to work.

H-008.02

17 Are the people who make up their above  
18 average unemployment rate qualified for and able to  
19 afford the trip to Boston for jobs which don't even  
20 exist?

21 And using Brockton as an example, they  
22 have three commuter rail stations which all count as  
23 mixed used development surrounding them that would  
24 magically appear but haven't. Associated data shows



1 that their residents' use of public transportation  
2 has not increased since their stations were built in  
3 1997.

H-008.02

4 There are also a myriad of safety issues  
5 regarding grade crossings in Easton, a severe lack  
6 of safe and adequate parking, and permanent damage  
7 to the Hockomock Swamp to consider as well.

H-008.03

8 We feel that the whole idea is a bad  
9 one. Not enough people will use the rail line. It  
10 will cause billions that we don't have, funneling  
11 money from other pressing needs for repairs to roads  
12 and bridges and funding for our schools, and it will  
13 create more unfunded maintenance costs.

H-008.04

14 Additionally, the damage to local, state,  
15 and national historic sites will be devastating.  
16 Once our history is gone, it's gone.

H-008.05

17 We urge the Corps to consider this  
18 proposal and spare Easton and our neighbors from the  
19 cost and devastation to our history, environment,  
20 and communities.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

23 Ladies and gentlemen, please, we're -- no  
24 interruptions, please.

1 Thank you.

2 Our next speaker, James Watson, who will  
3 be followed by James Ragazzo.

4 JAMES WATSON: I'm passing.

5 JAMES RAGAZZO: I'm passing.

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Both.

7 Our next speaker will be Heather Graf,  
8 who will be followed by the Len Flynn.

9 HEATHER GRAF: Heather Graf, Norton's  
10 representative to the Southeastern Massachusetts  
11 Commuter Rail Task Force and Coordinator of Citizens  
12 Concerned About Tracks.

13 We continue to support the  
14 re-establishment of commuter rail service to the  
15 cities of Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River. The  
16 Town of Norton are encouraged by the findings of the  
17 Draft EIS.

18 We look forward to the final reports,  
19 which should eliminate the Attleboro Alternative  
20 from any further consideration for South Coast Rail.

21 Further comments will be submitted in  
22 writing.

23 Thank you very much.

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

H-009.01

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Len  
3 Flynn, who will be followed by Roy Nascimento. I  
4 hope I got that right.

5 LEONARD FLYNN: My name is Leonard Flynn.  
6 I'm Mansfield's Commissioner to the Southeast  
7 Regional Planning and Economic Development District.

8 This is a letter from the Southeast  
9 Regional Economic and Development District, dated  
10 May 4, 2011.

11 Mr. Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, Army Corps  
12 of Engineers, and Secretary Richard K. Sullivan,  
13 EOE.

14 Reference: Comments by SRPEDD of the  
15 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, South Coast  
16 Rail Project, released by the U.S. Corps of  
17 Engineers.

18 Dear Mr. Anacheke and Mr. Sullivan:

19 The Southeast Regional Planning and  
20 Economic Development District voted unanimously on  
21 April 27, 2011, to commend the United States Army  
22 Corps of Engineers for a thorough and objective  
23 analysis to the South Coast Rail Project in the  
24 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, dated February

H-010.01



1 2011.

2 SRPEDD supports the analysis in the  
3 report of both the transportation and environmental  
4 factors associated with the alternatives that were  
5 evaluated.

6 We agree that the Stoughton Route  
7 provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River,  
8 and New Bedford, as measured by travel time and  
9 ridership. We support the Corps' finding that  
10 operational obstacles associated with both the  
11 Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives would make  
12 these alternatives infeasible.

13 The fact that the Stoughton Route is  
14 served mostly by trains already in service, as  
15 opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily  
16 traveled corridor make the Stoughton Alternative the  
17 only viable choice from a transportation perspective.

18 SRPEDD is also in agreement with the  
19 Whittenton Alternative through the City of Taunton  
20 poses additional operational problems and should not  
21 be considered further.

22 Specifically large number of grade  
23 crossings in Taunton will be unnecessarily disruptive  
24 and will add to the travel time, thus lowering

1 ridership numbers.

2 SRPEDD further agrees with the analysis  
3 of environmental factors, including wetlands, air  
4 quality, water resources, et cetera, and supports  
5 the conclusion that the Stoughton Route performed  
6 best on the measure of environmental impact; that  
7 the fact the Stoughton Route follows rail beds that  
8 were in use a little over 50 years ago and is an  
9 obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.

10 We are very familiar with the corridor  
11 as it passes through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC, and  
12 agree with the conclusion that the wetlands impact  
13 will be limited, especially if the trestle is  
14 constructed. We would further request significant  
15 mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.

16 It should be pointed out there are many  
17 factors beyond the present purpose that argue in  
18 favor of the project and in favor of the Stoughton  
19 Route. These factors include --

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank  
21 you, sir.

22 LEONARD FLYNN: Okay.

23 MR. ROSENBERG: If you would, please,  
24 just make sure that we get your entire statement by

H-010.03

H-010.04

H-010.05

1 putting it in the box. We can enter it in, and I  
2 want to remind everybody again that there is a  
3 stenographer outside by the reception area where  
4 there are no imposed time restrictions.

5 Our next speaker is Roy Nascimento. He  
6 will be followed by Kyla Bennett.

7 ROY NASCIMENTO: Good evening. Thank  
8 you for the opportunity to comment today on the  
9 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, prepared by  
10 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

11 My name is Roy Nascimento. I'm President  
12 and CEO of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce.  
13 The Chamber of Commerce is a private, nonprofit  
14 business association that serves nearly 1,000 member  
15 businesses of all sizes from virtually all industries  
16 and ten communities in the South Coast region, and  
17 our mission is to serve the interest of member  
18 businesses while advocating business advancement,  
19 economic growth, and job creation for the benefit of  
20 New Bedford and the South Coast region.

21 Let me begin by thanking and commending  
22 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners  
23 for a thorough and objective analysis of the South  
24 Coast Rail Project and the Draft Environmental



1 Impact Statement, dated February 2011.

2 The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce  
3 remains a strong advocate for the extension of  
4 commuter rail service from Boston to New Bedford and  
5 other communities in the South Coast region of  
6 Massachusetts.

7 The Chamber agrees with the conclusions  
8 that identify the Stoughton Alternative as providing  
9 the best service to the communities in the South  
10 Coast region and providing the least environmental  
11 impact.

12 The fact that the Stoughton Route is  
13 served mostly by trains already in service as  
14 opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily  
15 traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the  
16 only viable choice from a transportation perspective.

17 Also, the fact that the Stoughton Route  
18 follows rail beds that were in use a little over  
19 50 years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the  
20 environmental impact.

21 We believe the final report should  
22 include double tracking the rail lines to provide  
23 future capacity and faster service.

24 It is important that any design,

H-011.01

H-011.02

1 permitting, and building of the rail be completed  
2 with an eye towards enhancing and expanding the  
3 service in the future.

H-011.02

4 In addition, the Chamber also believes  
5 that travel time and frequency of service is an  
6 important -- are important factors to the success of  
7 this project. To provide the greatest impact, we  
8 urge that travel time from the South Coast to Boston  
9 South Station be no more than 70 minutes.

H-011.03

10 Shorter commuting time gives businesses  
11 greater access to more workers with specialized  
12 skills, while residents of the region gain  
13 connectivity to employment opportunities along the  
14 Route 128 corridor and the business districts of  
15 Boston.

16 We also encourage full service  
17 throughout the day to meet demand and encourage  
18 ridership, a minimum of three trains in the morning  
19 peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak  
20 period should be utilized.

H-011.04

21 This includes full weekend service and  
22 intercity service between Taunton, New Bedford, and  
23 Fall River to encourage regional mobility.

24 We'd also like to see a late evening

1 train service to Boston to be considered for  
2 residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service  
3 would help support our growing tourism economy by  
4 connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our  
5 national park, our ferry service to Martha's  
6 Vineyard and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene  
7 in the South Coast.

H-011.04

8 The Chamber believes commuter rail  
9 extension is critical to economic development and  
10 growth in the region and in keeping with long-range  
11 smart growth planning strategies that support the  
12 environment and encourage development around priority  
13 development areas.

H-011.05

14 Commuter rail extension to the South  
15 Coast will also help meet existing and future demand  
16 for public transportation and enhanced regional  
17 mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to  
18 the region by reducing congestion and increasing  
19 travel choice.

20 On behalf of the member businesses and  
21 their thousands of employees, we encourage the Army  
22 Corps and its partners to complete the review and  
23 make the determination as quickly as possible.

24 Thank you for a project for us.



1 Thank you.

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is Kyla  
5 Bennett, who will be followed by Scott Martin.

6 KYLA BENNETT: Thank you. Kyla Bennett,  
7 representing PEER, a national nonprofit.

8 I'd like to preface my comments with  
9 this caution. I am very cranky. I have been  
10 struggling to read over 2,500 pages of a Draft EIS  
11 that apparently is different than the other -- than  
12 the one that the rest of the audience has been  
13 reading, because I have not found it comprehensive  
14 or complete. In fact, I found it disingenuous.

H-012.01

15 The DEIS has critical errors. For  
16 example, incorrect project purpose stated on page 2-2.  
17 It has missing documents on which the DEIS relies  
18 heavily, like the CTPS January 2011 work trips to  
19 Boston memo, and it also has information that's  
20 simply not there, information required by the MEPA  
21 certificates, like maps and costs of wetland  
22 mitigation; hence, I am very cranky.

23 Someone once said that the definition of  
24 insanity is doing the same thing over and over again

1 and expecting a different result. That's what I've  
2 been doing on this project for more than ten years,  
3 and I know that I am not insane; therefore, I believe  
4 it is the project and perhaps the Commonwealth of  
5 Massachusetts that is insane.

6 I know the state has been pushing you,  
7 Corps, I have heard them push you. Please, don't  
8 let their haste result in a shoddy work product or a  
9 rush decision. You or EPA can stop the insanity  
10 that's going on.

11 The state's own caps analysis states and  
12 this is a quote, "The two routes through the  
13 Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss  
14 in ecological integrity." How then can that be the  
15 LEDPA? It is not possible. The bus is the LEDPA.

16 Even if the Corps were to come to the  
17 incorrect conclusion that the Stoughton Alternative  
18 is the LEDPA, it is not a permissible project.  
19 Bisecting the Hockomock Swamp and the ACEC of  
20 national significance and threatening water supplies  
21 of a number of municipalities is contrary to the  
22 public interest and would cause or contribute to  
23 significant degradation of waters of the U.S. contrary  
24 to this Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) guidelines. I

H-012.02

H-012.03

1 want to leave you with three important thoughts.

H-012.03

2 Number one, we need an extension of  
3 time. It's unreasonable to expect us to read 2,500  
4 pages in 46 business days. You are making yourselves  
5 vulnerable to a lawsuit without giving us an  
6 extension.

H-012.04

7 Number two, the state needs to do a  
8 supplemental DEIS, because they have not provided  
9 the information necessary.

H-012.05

10 And, finally, the state's preferred  
11 alternative is not legally permissible. Follow the  
12 law and the science, not the politics. The bus is  
13 the LEDPA.

H-012.06

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen,  
18 please, no interruptions. Thank you.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You have to chastise  
20 the people from DOT, who were applauding in  
21 favor -- of those speaking in favor of it.

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

23 Our next speaker will be Scott --

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Point of information,



1 please?

2 MR. ROSENBERG: No.

3 Our next speaker will be Scott Martin,  
4 who will be followed by Doug Lewis.

5 At a break, you're welcome to come and  
6 talk to me.

7 Sir.

8 SCOTT MARTIN: Thank you. My name is  
9 Scott Martin. I'm from South Easton. I represent  
10 myself and my family.

11 Based upon the fact that it doesn't  
12 sound like anybody really wants a train through  
13 their town, but they want to get some of the  
14 benefits, I'm asking the question why?

15 I would like to know if a feasibility  
16 study has truly been conducted to ensure long-term  
17 financial stability of the project as well as the  
18 potential usage of this rail line.

H-013.01

19 Job creation and environmental protection  
20 are sound reasons but not if the future of the rail  
21 generates an increase in the overwhelming deficit  
22 the MBTA already has on the books.

H-013.02

23 One of the marketed purposes of this  
24 expansion is to bring passengers seeking employment

1 from New Bedford to Fall River -- from New Bedford  
2 and Fall River to Boston where the jobs are located.

3 Does the state not realize there are  
4 plenty of unemployed people in Boston that could  
5 fill those jobs if they existed?

6 There's also the cost of transportation.  
7 If the ticketing price is structured similar to  
8 current pricing, it will cost at least \$300 for  
9 riders, based on Zone 8 to Middleborough being 250.  
10 It's likely that the state will find enough riders  
11 to pay \$300 a month for the train plus parking lot  
12 fees to get into Boston in order to cover the  
13 expense of the train. The stated benefit of  
14 providing Boston workers access to affordable  
15 housing in the South Coast is negated by the  
16 prohibitive cost of the transportation. The train  
17 loses its appeal when a parking pass and gas ends up  
18 costing around the same.

19 What's more likely to happen is the  
20 state will need to subsidize the tickets as well as  
21 pay the operating expense differential, which will  
22 lead to another deficit-feeding, state-run endeavor.  
23 It's shortsighted thinking like that that landed us  
24 a \$4.6 million bridge for horses to walk over

H-013.02

H-013.03

1 Route 24.

2 It created many jobs for about three to  
3 four years, but in the end the money spent will  
4 never be recouped. These same jobs could have been  
5 directed at the hundreds of overpasses and bridges  
6 that people and vehicles actually use that are in  
7 serious disrepair.

8 I would also like to ask for an extension.  
9 I know that we have about 24,000 residents in Easton,  
10 and I would largely believe that the majority of  
11 them oppose this, but none of them knew of this  
12 meeting tonight.

13 There was a very poor notification method.  
14 I think an extension and perhaps another meeting  
15 with proper advertising and notification. If it  
16 wasn't for the fact that I have some very proactive  
17 neighbors, I wouldn't know about this tonight, and  
18 you would see a lot more people in this auditorium  
19 if they knew about it.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next -- ladies and  
24 gentlemen, I ask that we continue to follow just one

H-013.03

H-013.04



1 simple rule tonight, just be polite. Please don't  
2 interrupt the speakers that don't represent your  
3 perspective, and, please, no applause for those that  
4 do.

5 I certainly believe that everybody here  
6 tonight has the right to express their opinion, so,  
7 please, let's conduct this session in an orderly  
8 fashion, so all in attendance will have an opportunity  
9 to express themselves freely without the fear of  
10 being belittled by those who do not agree with their  
11 opinion.

12 So we will continue now. Mr. Lewis will  
13 be our next speaker, followed by Dottie Fulginiti.

14 DOUG LEWIS: Thank you. My name is Doug  
15 Lewis. I'm a resident of South Easton. I'm here to  
16 represent myself and my family.

17 First and foremost, I'd like to see you  
18 extend the time allocated to review this document.  
19 It's not -- the 27th of May is not enough time.

20 From a ROI perspective, I don't understand  
21 the purpose of this project. Is it to move people  
22 from New Bedford/Fall River for work in Boston, or  
23 is it to improve the economies of New Bedford and  
24 Fall River?

H-014.01

H-014.02

1           If the purpose is to bring people from  
2 New Bedford and Fall River for jobs, where is the  
3 information regarding those jobs?

H-014.02

4           In addition, I believe the ridership  
5 figures for the rail option are flawed and grossly  
6 overinflated. In fact, as a point of reference, the  
7 state originally estimated the Greenbush Line to be  
8 4,200 riders. In a recently published article from  
9 the Boston Globe, the ridership after three years is  
10 averaging 2,100 riders or 50 percent of projection,  
11 and the numbers are declining.

H-014.03

12           I have every reason to believe the state  
13 is doing the same here. With the average cost of  
14 \$1.6 billion, this project needs to be scrutinized  
15 to the full extent, especially in light of what's  
16 going on in today's economy where we are teetering  
17 right now between another recession and possible  
18 hyperinflation.

H-014.04

19           In looking at the documents, specifically  
20 the sections for noise and vibration, I was upset to  
21 see there are portions of Easton neighborhoods and  
22 entire streets completely missing from the report,  
23 i.e., from Prospect Street and Purchase Street.

H-014.05

24           I would, therefore, assume there are

1 other dwellings missing as well. This oversight  
2 will directly increase the project cost as well as  
3 add to the negative environmental impact of the  
4 Stoughton Alternative. I ask the Army Corps to  
5 please revisit this.

H-014.05

6 In my review of the documents thus far,  
7 I believe the data to be incomplete and misleading,  
8 which is very concerning. This also leads me to  
9 believe the cost estimates for this project are  
10 grossly underestimated, which goes back to the  
11 original question, why are we doing this in the  
12 first place?

H-014.06

13 If a transportation system, not South  
14 Coast Rail is to be put in place, and, again, I am  
15 not clear on its purpose, then I propose the Bus  
16 Alternative, which is the least -- excuse me -- I've  
17 got to -- this practicable word I have a problem  
18 with -- environmentally damaging practicable  
19 alternative, LEDPA.

H-014.07

20 Thank you for your time and consideration.

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
24 Dottie Fulginiti, followed by Heather Lewis.



1 DOTTIE FULGINITI: Hi. My name is  
2 Dottie Fulginiti, and I'm from Easton, and I would  
3 just like to note that I am against the train coming  
4 through Easton.

H-015.01

5 I think it's environmentally  
6 irresponsible. It will jeopardize our water supply  
7 and our historic district. I also think it's  
8 economically irresponsible. There's no benefit to  
9 Easton for the train to come through. I think that  
10 the money would be much better spent to revitalize  
11 the South Coast. I think that there is good  
12 opportunity down there, but I don't see why it has  
13 to be connected by transportation.

H-015.02

14 I think that we could hire a limo to  
15 drive every person from New Bedford to Boston for  
16 the amount of money that we're intending to spend on  
17 this project, and I agree with the representative  
18 from Berkley that this is a boondoggle.

H-015.03

19 Thank you.

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
23 Heather Lewis, who will be followed by Steven -- it  
24 looks like D-R-O-B-N-I-S.

1 STEVEN DROBNIS: Exactly.

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you.

3 Ma'am.

4 HEATHER LEWIS: My name is Heather  
5 Lewis. I'm a resident of Easton.

6 First of all, I'd like to request an  
7 extension for the review period as well.

H-016.01

8 I have several environmental concerns to  
9 highlight tonight and will follow up with written  
10 comments reviewing those concerns as well as  
11 additional concerns.

12 My first area of concern is the impact  
13 to Easton's drinking water. The train will pass  
14 extremely close to Easton's most productive drinking  
15 water well at the end of Gary Lane. This well is  
16 located in a Zone 1.

17 I have multiple concerns in this regard.  
18 Mostly, I am concerned with the day-to-day impact of  
19 a train travelling beside this well and the impact  
20 to the quality of Easton's drinking supply.

H-016.02

21 I have been to South Station before and  
22 looked at the trains and tracks. They are covered  
23 with grime. I am concerned that this runoff of the  
24 grime will end up contaminating Easton's drinking

1 water. Easton residents do not want this residue  
2 and grime dripping into our water supply each and  
3 every time a train passes. I ask the Army Corps to  
4 review this concern carefully.

H-016.02

5 I also request that the two following  
6 environmental questions be answered during the  
7 review process: First, how can the Army Corps  
8 justify bisecting an area of critical environmental  
9 concern, let alone the largest vegetated fresh water  
10 wetland in the state?

H-016.03

11 I also ask how will they mitigate for  
12 the fragmentation of the Hockomock Swamp if this  
13 Stoughton Alternative is chosen?

H-016.04

14 I have heard other citizens ask for data  
15 to be checked and corrected. I would ask the same.

16 In the No. 3 slide from Kristina Egan  
17 earlier, which described which alternative has the  
18 least environmental impact, there is a discrepancy  
19 between the listed items and then their quotation  
20 from the DEIS. They are on that slide alone.

H-016.05

21 Lastly, I would like to bring to the  
22 Army Corps' attention that the comments you receive  
23 from residents of Fall River and New Bedford and the  
24 residents -- representatives have been influenced by

H-016.06



1 the state.

2 As an example of influence just last  
3 week Mass. DOT hosted a question and answer session  
4 for residents of New Bedford and Fall River, quote,  
5 "To help residents prepare for the hearing, and to  
6 describe how to write a comment letter."

7 No such workshop was offered in Stoughton,  
8 Easton, or Raynham where residents have serious  
9 concerns. I believe this is an example of inequity  
10 and that the state is trying to coach residents of  
11 these towns who would like to see this project  
12 completed.

13 I respectfully ask that the Corps keep  
14 the state's motives in check when they listen to and  
15 review the comments.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to share  
17 several of my concerns.

18 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker  
21 is -- our next speaker is Steven Drobni s.

22 STEVEN DROBNIS: Drobni s.

23 MR. ROSENBERG: Drobni s.

24 Thank you, si r.

H-016.06

1                   And you will be followed by Diane  
2     Peterson.

3                   STEVEN DROBNIS:   My name --

4                   DIANE PETERSON:   Pass.

5                   STEVEN DROBNIS:   My name is Steven  
6     Drobnis of Stoughton, Massachusetts.   I represent  
7     myself.

8                   I would like to speak against the  
9     commuter rail and freight rail project going through  
10    the Town of Stoughton.   Currently, we have eight  
11    street grade crossings and should you proceed with  
12    this devastating program, the lives of our children  
13    and citizens would be irreparably harmed.

H-017.01

14                  First, there's a question how much is a  
15    child's life worth.   My value, it is priceless.  
16    Many children have died from the trains at railroad  
17    crossings.

18                  Secondly, freight trains increase the  
19    length of time that a gate blocks a roadway, which  
20    is precious time when an ambulance or fire apparatus  
21    is delayed from reaching its destination to save  
22    property or a life.   In just ten minutes, irreparable  
23    brain damage occurs to an individual suffering a  
24    heart attack.

H-017.02

1 Thirdly, our middle school is right next  
2 to the train tracks and just consider 34 to 37  
3 passenger trains a day blowing the whistle in  
4 addition to numerous freight trains while our  
5 children are attempting to study or take a test.  
6 The high school is directly behind the middle school  
7 as well.

H-017.03

8 Fourthly, hazardous material could be  
9 transported by these freight trains through our  
10 quiet, suburban community. The proposed LNG facility  
11 in Fall River could possibly send LNG freight trains  
12 and other hazardous material such as PCBs through  
13 our heavily residential community, causing  
14 catastrophic loss of life and property damage; and,  
15 whereas, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has taken  
16 over the liability for the CSX rails and assumed  
17 responsibility, this limits the liability for suit  
18 against municipalities, including the state, to a  
19 maximum of \$100,000 per person to my understanding.

H-017.04

20 In addition, the proposed \$2 billion  
21 cost of this project when -- as an estimated 1,500  
22 passengers per day is equal to close to one million,  
23 333 dollars and 33 -- I mean, \$1,333,333 cost per  
24 passenger. It would be less costly to buy each one

H-017.05



1 of them a Cadillac with free fuel for life.

H-017.05

2 Should this project go forth, it will  
3 bring economic hardship to our town, a nightmare in  
4 traffic congestion, and undue financial burden to  
5 our taxpayers. No rail project within the State of  
6 Massachusetts has ever broken even or made a profit  
7 and has only been a burden to the taxpayers of the  
8 Commonwealth.

H-017.06

9 In closing, I can only hope and pray  
10 that the Army Corps of Engineers and the Commonwealth  
11 of Massachusetts reconsider this devastating proposal.

12 I thank you for your time and your  
13 attention.

14 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Diane  
17 Peterson who --

18 DIANE PETERSON: Pass.

19 MR. ROSENBERG: -- will be followed --

20 Pass. Yes, ma'am.

21 Mr. James Avita (phonetic  
22 spelling) -- Avevto.

23 Mr. -- you'll have to pronounce your  
24 name for me. I'm sorry.

1                   You will be followed by Donald Bennett.

2                   AUDIENCE MEMBER: Will you, please, put  
3 him to the end of the list. He had to leave for a  
4 few minutes.

5                   JAMES AZEVEDO: Hi. My name is James  
6 Azevedo, formerly a resident of Easton.

7                   Since 1997, I have been pointing out the  
8 dangers to Easton's wells to the Army Corps when  
9 they had their office at Waltham and then in Concord.

10                  I pointed out the four and a half miles  
11 of wetlands connected to the Queset Brook Aquifer in  
12 the three main wells, also, several wells that  
13 belonged to West Bridgewater downstream.

14                  Now, when asked when I was in their  
15 office in 2002 what I was looking for, I said  
16 "safety measures." He said "what?" And I said  
17 "Retaining walls and drain pipes carry the effluents  
18 away." He said "That would cost too much, 50, 60  
19 million."

20                  Evidently, somebody studied this, and if  
21 they can't do it right the first time, why are we  
22 letting them do it now?

23                  Thank you.

24                  MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

H-018.01

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Kevin  
3 Sullivan, who will be followed by Priscilla Chapman.

4 Kevin Sullivan.

5 Priscilla Chapman. Ms. Chapman will be  
6 followed by John Malloy.

7 PRISCILLA CHAPMAN: Good evening. I'm  
8 Priscilla Chapman. I'm speaking on behalf of Mass.  
9 Audubon.

10 Mass. Audubon is an abutter to this  
11 project through its ownership of the 954-acre  
12 Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeville  
13 that would be crossed by this project.

14 We generally support commuter rail  
15 improvements as an alternative to highway expansion  
16 and a means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We  
17 support the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan as a  
18 means to preserve habitat and reduce vehicle miles  
19 traveled.

20 At the same time this project bears  
21 careful review as it involves potentially significant  
22 adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high  
23 ecological significance and habitat for a number of  
24 state-listed species.

H-019.01



1 Recognizing that Mass. DOT has identified  
2 the Stoughton Route as the preferred alternative,  
3 we're going to focus our comments on the resources  
4 and impacts associated with that route, including  
5 those in the Southern Triangle.

6 Reconstruction of the rail bed in the  
7 Hockomock Swamp would cut through the largest  
8 unfragmented and pristine area of wetland habitat in  
9 Eastern Mass.

10 The DEIS utilized the U. Mass CAPS  
11 Analysis to measure the loss of ecological integrity  
12 and biodiversity that would result from each  
13 alternative, and that analysis indicates that the  
14 Stoughton Alternative would result in a major loss  
15 of ecological integrity, 456 units as compared to  
16 324 for Attleboro, and zero for the Rapid Bus. The  
17 Stoughton Alternative also results in filling of  
18 significant areas of wetlands, impacts to vernal  
19 pools, diversion of a stream, and other impacts.

20 We request that you require preparation  
21 of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
22 and report for the following reasons: The MEPA  
23 scope required that the Draft EIR include a detailed  
24 mitigation plan for impacts to wetlands, rare

H-019.02

1 species and biodiversity and wildlife, but the DEIS  
2 states that the mitigation plans will be prepared at  
3 a later date. Without the opportunity to review  
4 proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to  
5 evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory  
6 standards.

H-019.02

7 The MEPA scope required an endangered  
8 species impact analysis based on surveys and vernal  
9 pool identification. To the best of our knowledge,  
10 those were not provided for areas in the Southern  
11 Triangle.

H-019.03

12 The DEIS identifies projected impacts of  
13 induced growth and development, such as increased  
14 greenhouse gas emissions, loss of forests and  
15 farmland, and it says that those impacts will be  
16 mitigated by implementation of the corridor plan.  
17 We request a detailed implementation plan for how  
18 that will happen to ensure that those offsets will  
19 occur.

H-019.04

20 And, finally, the MEPA certificate  
21 required the DEIS to address how the project and the  
22 corridor plan will be finalized -- financed, and  
23 that's not very much.

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you. Thank you,

1 ma' am.

2 Thank you very much.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, John  
5 Malloy, who will be followed by Edward Hands. Hahn,  
6 Hands or Hahn?

7 JOHN MALLOY: Thank you. My name is  
8 John Malloy, and I am from Stoughton, and I represent  
9 myself.

10 I look at the cost of this project of  
11 \$2 billion and think of the ridership projections,  
12 and I have difficulty understanding those ridership  
13 projections, as I have attended other meetings  
14 because I had worked in Southeastern Massachusetts  
15 for a period of 10 years. As such, I found that  
16 folks who live in Fall River and New Bedford tend to  
17 rely on Providence for medical services, for events,  
18 and for recreation. They come to Boston only when  
19 they need to come to Boston for some other reasons.

H-020.01

20 However, when I look also at the traffic  
21 coming up Route 24 and heading into Boston, I see it  
22 gets choked up on Route 24, just before it hits  
23 Route 128, and most of the congestion begins going  
24 west up 128, rather than into Boston. So I look at

H-020.02



1 the ridership projections and wonder about that.

2 Hearing folks speak tonight, I think of  
3 \$2 billion would really help Fall River and New  
4 Bedford a lot better than probably the train. I  
5 only see the train as servicing a casino if it lands  
6 in Southeastern Massachusetts.

H-020.02

7 So I'd ask -- I don't know if that falls  
8 within the scope of the Army Corps of Engineers to  
9 look at the ridership, but I would encourage them to  
10 do so.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker  
15 Edward -- Edmund Hands, followed by Michael Mazzuca.

16 EDMUND HANDS: Thank you for giving us  
17 the opportunity to speak, and I hope it's become  
18 clear that the -- the state is pushing the most  
19 politically expedient route rather than a route that  
20 is supported by the scientific evidence. I think it  
21 dramatically underestimates the impact on the  
22 Hockomock Swamp, and I join with my fellow citizens  
23 in Easton in requesting additional time to analyze  
24 that.

H-021.01

1           And just a brief look through, I notice  
2           that it doesn't mention that marble salamanders are  
3           found in the Hockomock Swamp. It underestimates the  
4           potential of the right-of-way for turtle habitat,  
5           saying it has been degraded by bicycles and dirt  
6           bikes, but it doesn't really mention other areas and  
7           other alternatives that may have been significantly  
8           degraded as well.

H-021.02

9           Also, there are at least five buildings  
10          in the North Easton area that are within 25 feet of  
11          the track. These are historic buildings, and I  
12          think we need a closer look at the impact of  
13          vibrations on those buildings as well.

H-021.03

14          I oppose all rail transport for  
15          passengers, and I kind of agree with the statement  
16          that was made that that was yesterday's technology  
17          for tomorrow. I support the bus route. It seems to  
18          me that enhanced bus service is gaining a wider  
19          range of looks throughout the country and in other  
20          countries while rail seems to be falling behind.

H-021.04

21          We need to take a closer look at the  
22          issue of freight traffic. I know we're supposed to  
23          be evaluating passenger routes, but the Stoughton  
24          Alternative now says it can carry freight, and the

1 potential of an accident in the Hockomock Swamp or  
2 near our drinking water is something that deserves  
3 increased scrutiny.

H-021.04

4 The cost of the project, I think, reflects  
5 in the criteria that is used to determine the  
6 correct route. Criteria 2.2 says it should not  
7 significantly adversely affect the existing or  
8 future capacity reliability and quality of the  
9 regional transportation system. I think if you  
10 build any rail route at between 2 billion and  
11 \$4 billion, it's going to be like that really bad  
12 draft choice that you make that you can't cut  
13 because you put so much money into it; but if you  
14 invest in a bus system, which seems to be the future  
15 of transportation for passengers, you're going to be  
16 spending half as much money. If it turns out to be  
17 a mistake, you'd still have the opportunity to  
18 correct it.

H-021.05

19 And, finally, on the issue of smart  
20 growth, I'd like to point out that unlike times to  
21 and from Boston, smart growth is a policy decision.  
22 It is not a fact of nature or a law like the law of  
23 gravity. There are alternative suggestions by  
24 academics as well as other politicians, and the fact

H-021.06

1 that smart growth requires rail makes it a core  
2 criteria to use.

3 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

4 Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
7 Michael Mazzuca, followed by Donald Michaud.

8 MICHAEL MAZZUCA: My name is Mike  
9 Mazzuca, and I'm from Easton Massachusetts, and I'm  
10 here representing my two young sons because what  
11 we're talking about is open, operating rails through  
12 existing neighborhoods.

H-022.01

13 My kids love trains. I don't know how  
14 I'm going to keep them off the tracks.

15 I read this here, and it says the purpose  
16 of the rail is to more fully meet the existing and  
17 future demand for public transportation between  
18 Fall River and New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts.  
19 I think the key word there is demand, because I  
20 don't think there is any demand.

H-022.02

21 I went to UMass Dartmouth for engineering.  
22 I lived in Fairhaven. I worked in Fall River. I  
23 had no plans of ever going from there to Boston. We  
24 always went to Providence. I have people who still



1 work there. I have engineering friends, lawyer  
2 friends, professional people who could get jobs in  
3 Boston. I asked them if your job moved to Cambridge,  
4 what would you do? They said I would drive in until  
5 I found another job, or I moved, because there's no  
6 way I am taking that much time on the train to go to  
7 Boston. It's just not in the cards.

H-022.02

8 I'd also like to take a look at the bus  
9 plan. I look in the rider -- in the draft report,  
10 and I just want to know how a dedicated bus lane  
11 with the zipper gets less ridership than expanding  
12 the existing buses.

H-022.03

13 Thanks.

14 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Donald  
17 Michaud, followed by Robert Mendi llo.

18 DONALD MICHAUD: Good evening. My name  
19 is Donald Michaud. I'm from Attleboro and a citizen  
20 of the United States as well. I don't have to show  
21 my card, I hope.

22 I would like to first thank the Corps of  
23 Engineers for their study. It has been a lengthy  
24 study, under changing circumstances, which has

1       lengthened their time of completing this study.

2               I'd like to also mention that I have  
3       been here at many meetings. I have been to the  
4       Norton meeting, the Lakeville meeting, the Fall  
5       River meeting, the Freetown meeting, the Attleboro  
6       meeting, and now I'm here at another meeting.

7               I have written many letters to the Corps  
8       of Engineers and to the Mass. DOT, and I hope I -- I  
9       wonder -- my question would be do I have to write  
10      that same letter over again? Because in the letter,  
11      I have stated 15 facts which supports the Stoughton  
12      Alternative if there's to be a train that I would  
13      choose the Stoughton Alternative for 15 different  
14      facts, and of these facts, I will mention a few.

H-023.01

15              Fact: It has been the best cost-benefit  
16      effectiveness versus the other.

H-023.02

17              Fact: The trip time is 72 to 74 minutes  
18      which is better than the other alternatives.

H-023.03

19              Fact: Less acres of wetlands will be  
20      taken compared to the Attleboro Bypass -- compared  
21      to the -- yeah, Attleboro Bypass and alternatives.  
22      Stoughton is 6.74 acres versus Attleboro 7.82 to 8.5  
23      acres. Middleborough is 3.61 acres.

H-023.04

24              Fact: It is compatible with the

H-023.05

1 existing rail system.

H-023.05

2 Fact: It is a straight shot to Boston.

3 Fact: It adds another direct rail line

H-023.06

4 to Boston. Fact -- and that's very important,

5 instead of just having the Old Colony Line, which

6 everything dumps into, at least if something

7 happens, and we've already had four times happening,

H-023.07

8 people being killed on that line and people stranded

9 in Boston they could be able to get out and get to

10 Taunton and get home a little earlier than four

11 hours later.

12 I guess I have another minute coming.

13 But the freight trains also is a

14 consideration. Boston -- Fall River has a big state

15 pier, and there's great potential for straight -- for

16 freight there, and as well as this gas situation

17 that they talk about.

H-023.08

18 So, I say I now recommend that only

19 the -- the Whittenton be eliminated and just

20 Stoughton if the train is to be the method.

21 And I now recommend that this Stoughton

22 Rail Alternative be -- be the one that the Final

23 Environmental Impact Report is chosen for.

24 And I thank you and have a good evening.

1 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

2 Our next speaker is Robert Mendillo, who  
3 will be followed by Paul Di Nicola.

4 ROBERT MENDILLO: Thank you. Good  
5 evening. My name is Robert Mendillo. I'm a  
6 resident of Stoughton. I've lived in Stoughton  
7 since 1983, and I'm here speaking individually.

8 With all due respect, I'd like to begin  
9 by chastising the Corps for holding the meeting in  
10 Mansfield, not that I have anything against  
11 Mansfield, but it seems to me that it would have  
12 been much more appropriate to hold this meeting in  
13 Stoughton or in Easton or Canton or some other city  
14 or town along the route; and I think it is a slight  
15 on the communities that are involved and that will  
16 be most impacted by this, and I fear that it  
17 represents an influence from the Mass. DOT because  
18 I'm sure they do not want this hearing to take place  
19 in a community or in communities that would be  
20 opposed to this project. I note that it's in  
21 Fall River and New Bedford and the people there  
22 presumably support it. So I'm very much offended by  
23 the notion that this proceeding is taking place not  
24 in one of the towns that is affected.

H-024.01



1           Let me say this is the type of proposal  
2           that I could generally support. I am a liberal  
3           Democrat. I grew up with parents from The New Deal.  
4           This is a project that helps people in a community  
5           that needs some economic help. I'm in favor of the  
6           trains. I've taken the trains into Boston for  
7           25 years. So if people want to spend \$2 billion to  
8           get four or 5,000 people into Boston at a cost of  
9           \$400,000 per person, hey I'm for public works. That  
10          maybe makes sense. It doesn't to me, but I guess I  
11          could support it.

H-024.02

12           But what irritates me about this, and  
13           I've been present when Ms. Egan has spoken on behalf  
14           of Mass. DOT before is that there is absolutely  
15           nothing in this proposal that in any way, manner, or  
16           respect benefits the Town of Stoughton. There is no  
17           mention of benefiting the Town of Stoughton or  
18           frankly any other towns along the route.

H-024.03

19           Stoughton is a relatively poor town.  
20           The downtown is not in good shape. This would ruin  
21           downtown Stoughton. The dream of Mass. DOT is a  
22           nightmare for the Town of Stoughton.

23           Ms. Egan has made it clear that there  
24           would be no effort whatsoever to build a tunnel; so,

1 we have a relatively sleepy train system now in  
2 Stoughton. That would be replaced, as many have  
3 noted, by trains six or seven days a week, including  
4 freight trains.

5 Helping the people of Fall River and  
6 New Bedford is laudable, but not on the backs of the  
7 people of Stoughton.

8 (Applause.)

9 ROBERT MENDILLO: We -- this would be  
10 doing nothing other than sacrificing the people of  
11 Stoughton so that people in New Bedford and Fall  
12 River could arguably receive a benefit. We all know  
13 that is complete and utter nonsense; and I would  
14 urge the Corps because its mandate is not purely  
15 environmental as people think it is or as people  
16 think the definition is, but to consider issues of  
17 economic injustice, aesthetics, overall quality of  
18 life. On all of those points this is a disaster for  
19 Stoughton.

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

21 ROBERT MENDILLO: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you very much.

24 Our next speaker is Paul De -- I'm

1       sorry -- Di Nicola.

2                   PAUL Di NICOLA:   Yeah.

3                   MR. ROSENBERG:   He will be followed by  
4       Priscilla Almquist-Olsen.

5                   PAUL Di NICOLA:   Thank you for letting me  
6       speak.   My name is Paul Di Nicola.   I'm from Easton.  
7       I'm representing myself.

8                   Along with many others from Easton, I  
9       propose that there's an extension for the review of  
10      this proposal. H-025.01

11                   One of the alternatives seems to be an  
12      all-or-none option that we have here.   It's either  
13      rail or bus or nothing.   I think we need to look at  
14      an alternative hybrid, use existing train stations,  
15      but maybe use buses.

16                   One of the things that many people have  
17      brought up is really the economic feasibility of H-025.02  
18      this, putting in a rail bed and all those are really  
19      sunk costs, and if doesn't work out, it's just cost  
20      and cost and cost.

21                   If we did buses and see if you really  
22      get the ridership for a while, bring them to  
23      existing stations, do people really want to go?  
24      Then you get a chance to say, do you get the numbers

1 that back what you want to do? And then you can  
2 come back later to extend these trains and avoid all  
3 of this other nonsense that appears to be going on  
4 as far as, you know, disruption of the environment.  
5 So I think people ought to look at some alternatives  
6 that are least impact economically and even  
7 environmentally.

H-025.02

8 The other concern around ridership and  
9 all of this, just recently if you looked at the  
10 census, Massachusetts lost a representative; so that  
11 means population, we're losing it. Traveling to the  
12 cities, you can look at what's happening to trains  
13 and riderships. So I think, again, the feasibility  
14 on this really, really needs to be looked at.

H-025.03

15 The rails, they haven't been used for  
16 50 years. Well, guess what, Easton has changed.  
17 Many of the other towns have changed dramatically  
18 both in population and everywhere else where we're  
19 building. Also, I think the environmental laws and  
20 regulations and what we look for has changed over  
21 this time. So to say it went there before and  
22 go -- you know, we can just -- you pick up and do  
23 the same thing without a real study and -- and  
24 looking at what the impact to the town is a little

H-025.04



1 bit ridiculous. I don't think that that's -- you  
2 can just go on 50 years.

3 And I -- let me see. Oh, yeah, I wanted  
4 to question the DOT's statement about wouldn't need  
5 a lot of cars if you use the Stoughton existing  
6 line. Guess what? You heard people want -- I want  
7 more runs out of New Bedford and all this. I want  
8 so much of this. I want frequency. I extend the  
9 time 70 minutes. You've got to add more cars.  
10 You've got to add more trains, and to be honest, for  
11 two stops, that is one of the highest delayed trains  
12 I've seen, and I've ridden it for years; so, it's  
13 not going to be that good of a line, and people are  
14 just going to try it out and then avoid it. If you  
15 get delays as much as you do on Stoughton, and then  
16 you have to, you know, lengthen it because you're  
17 going 70 minutes, it's just going to make it  
18 unbearable for people to ride or do it today; and I  
19 would say one of the last big train wrecks was on  
20 that Stoughton line.

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank  
22 you very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Priscilla

1 Almquist-Olsen, who will be followed by Abdul Shibli.

2 PRISCILLA ALMQUIST-OLSEN: Good evening.

3 I rise in opposition to the Stoughton  
4 proposal, but in support of the bus alternative. I  
5 think tonight we have heard from many people about  
6 what is in accordance with the public interest.

7 So I'm not going to repeat the  
8 environmentally damaging impacts, the -- especially  
9 the -- the problems with our water supply. As a  
10 resident of North Easton and the Village, I'm going  
11 to be awakened at 5:00 a.m. in the morning. I don't  
12 know if that interests you, but it certainly does  
13 me. I'm getting on in years. I'm 68. I know I  
14 don't look it. I don't act it, but, you know what,  
15 when that ambulance is called, I might be a victim  
16 because the ambulance is going to be coming from the  
17 other side of the tracks.

18 So, I was interested in what Lieutenant  
19 Colonel Howell mentioned. He talked about the  
20 impact on the human environment, and you heard many  
21 people tonight talk about that, whether it's the  
22 inaccessibility of services like the ambulance and  
23 fire, police, or whether it's the potential damage  
24 to our water supply. You've heard all those things.

H-026.01

1 But think about the human impact. Every day, waking  
2 up at 5:00 a.m. from the blast of a train whistle.  
3 We have someone in our audience today, who has a  
4 house 20 feet from the tracks. All right. So -- so  
5 please, consider that.

H-026.01

6 We have five of the Henry Hobson  
7 Richardson's buildings, which are internationally  
8 known and historic. We have saved those for what?  
9 A train to come -- we've saved them this year from  
10 being destroyed. We're going to have condominiums  
11 there, apartments. For what? For the train to come  
12 past them within 25 feet to rattle them and cause  
13 all kinds of damage?

H-026.02

14 We have a wastewater treatment plant  
15 that's going in so that our downtown will be  
16 revitalized with restaurants and so forth that  
17 weren't formerly possible because of lack of sewer.  
18 You're going to devastate the Village of North  
19 Easton. You're going to devastate the Hockomock  
20 Swamp. You're going to create a problem for families  
21 and children and safety issues.

H-026.03

22 Please, the future is not the train. My  
23 daughter works for a company from Rockville, Maryland  
24 and when she moved from there to Princeton, they

H-026.04

1 said, well, please, stay. You can work from home,  
2 and she does. She's more productive now. She has  
3 video conferencing. She has 12 people under her.  
4 She gets more done at home. The future is not  
5 transportation. The future is technology when it  
6 comes to jobs --

7 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you.

8 PRISCILLA ALMQUIST-OLSEN: -- so I think  
9 this is very shortsighted.

10 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am. Thank  
11 you very much.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Abdul  
14 Shibli. He will be followed by Darshan Murphy.

15 Mr. Shibli?

16 Darshan Murphy. Mr. Murphy will be  
17 followed by Stephen Drown.

18 DARSHAN MURPHY: My name's Darshan  
19 Murphy. I'm a resident of Easton, Massachusetts.

20 Colonel, Moderator, Kristina, I want to  
21 cover also the human aspects. I know there's a lot  
22 of political and cost issues behind this, but the  
23 human, and I suppose some environmental reasoning is  
24 certainly of higher value.

H-026.04

H-027.01



1 I'm on what's considered the zero foot  
2 line. There's a portion of my home that comes  
3 within less than 25 feet. At standard distances for  
4 rail, the -- the barrier wall that has been  
5 proposed -- and I don't have the facts -- would be  
6 less than 15 feet from a point on my home.

H-027.01

7 I have a handicapped -- mentally  
8 handicapped child, and I have two children that will  
9 be within 25 feet of the rail, even with a retaining  
10 wall, regardless of the safety measures, there's  
11 always an imminent threat that safety can be  
12 compromised.

13 The Town of Easton has extensive  
14 environmental rules. I have a 100-foot dotted line  
15 that goes through my kitchen because it is a wetland  
16 barrier.

17 Two-thirds of my land is considered  
18 environmentally safe, and I cannot do anything on  
19 that land if I -- I have about 12 dead trees right  
20 now on my land that would make it look a little bit  
21 better and may serve nature by getting rid of them  
22 and letting them compost or putting them to another  
23 use, and per the statutes and stipulations of Easton,  
24 those 12 trees could require a public hearing to

H-027.02

1 remove, and we're talking about putting tons of dirt  
2 and other contaminants in the environment in and  
3 around my home.

H-027.02

4 On to more environmental and animal  
5 things. I learned today that the bluebird population  
6 of Easton is dwindling. It now has to be hand cared  
7 for by humans because of all the destruction that's  
8 occurring by the natural industrialization of our  
9 society.

H-027.03

10 Again, the grade crossings provide danger  
11 and safety issues, particularly for the children.  
12 Our towns do not have the money to build sidewalks.  
13 I can throw rocks and hit my elementary school. If  
14 you don't believe me, try it, but it requires a bus  
15 because there's not a safe, direct route to my  
16 elementary school, and my seven-year-old is more  
17 than capable of walking about 450 yards.

H-027.04

18 Lastly, on the cost front, all of a  
19 sudden, we are cutting jobs. We're cutting  
20 everything, including environmental funds left and  
21 right in this state, and my child cannot be educated.  
22 There are teachers losing their jobs. The city does  
23 not have enough money for my child; however, we have  
24 \$2 billion to build a rail.

H-027.05

1 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank  
2 you very much.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker,  
5 Stephen Drown. He will be followed by Stephen Ford.  
6 Stephen D-R-O-W-N.

7 Stephen Ford. Mr. Ford will be followed  
8 by John Musin (phonetic spelling).

9 STEPHEN FORD: Hi. My name is Stephen  
10 Ford. I am a resident of Easton.

11 I'd first like to say I support all my  
12 fellow residents of Easton and the concern of the  
13 rail going through Easton. But in addition to that  
14 I want to reiterate a lot of what they said, but one  
15 thing I did want to bring up was my safety and  
16 traffic concerns with all of the street grade  
17 crossings across the whole project, actually, but  
18 particularly in my area.

19 Reading the report, I didn't see a lot  
20 of detail that outlined the method or the threshold  
21 where bridges and tunnels would be required, you  
22 know, where there's significant impact that there  
23 needed to be some other structure to improve that  
24 area.

H-028.01

1           And that was actually across a lot of  
2       areas I was kind of concerned. Even in the noise  
3       area, I did not see anything that described, you  
4       know -- it definitely described, you know, the noise  
5       level impact as severe, moderate, and low, but it  
6       didn't say that there was a target or a threshold  
7       that was needed to be met, and that's where my  
8       concern is. So you can put up a wall, but if you  
9       don't dampen it enough, I -- I'm kind of concerned.

H-028.02

10           So I'm looking for some more detail on  
11       some more, you know, mitigation alternatives that  
12       help -- help figure out what the true requirement is  
13       and really what the project is going to be held  
14       against. And that's what I wanted to voice tonight.

H-028.03

15           Thank you.

16           MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

17           (Applause.)

18           MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker, John  
19       Muni z (phonetic spelling).

20           JOHN MONI Z: Moni z.

21           MR. ROSENBERG: Moni z. Thank you, sir.

22           Mr. Moni z will be followed by  
23       Sally -- it looks like K-0-S.

24           JOHN MONI Z: First of all, I'd like to



1 extend my gratitude to the Army Corps of Engineers  
2 to the duty that you've served our country; and in  
3 the past couple of days, we all thank -- I thank  
4 everyone in the military for what they've done and  
5 given us the ability to have this open forum.

6 So thank you.

7 That being said, I am a resident of the  
8 City of New Bedford. I am here solely on principle  
9 alone. I was raised in a family that was taught to  
10 stand up and voice your opinion for what you feel is  
11 right. I feel South Coast Rail is right for my  
12 area, which is the South Coast, New Bedford.

H-029.01

13 Now, ladies and gentlemen, here, you  
14 have nothing to worry about. Absolutely nothing.  
15 Because our state and local delegation in my area  
16 for the past 25 years has completely and utterly  
17 given us a disservice. So, therefore, this operation  
18 will never take place. So you have nothing to worry  
19 about.

20 As I look out in this crowd, I see  
21 productive members of society, taxpayers, and people  
22 who are willing to stand up and voice their opinion  
23 because they don't want their home to be destroyed.  
24 They don't want their children to be hurt. They

H-029.02

1 don't want their historical parts of their city to  
2 be taken away from them. You're absolutely  
3 100 percent right.

H-029.02

4 You have to understand that I am  
5 marrying someone who drives 120 miles every single  
6 day to work. So to those people who say, we don't  
7 work from the South Coast in Boston, we do. We're  
8 very small; so, therefore, \$2 billion does not, in  
9 my estimation -- it's not deemed adequate. It's a  
10 burden on you. It's a burden on me. It's a burden  
11 on every taxpayer in the Commonwealth of  
12 Massachusetts.

13 This state is in a financial shortfall,  
14 and we're spending money right now on these  
15 individuals here, the Army Corps, excluded, Ms.  
16 Egan, and the entire South Coast Rail organization,  
17 and at the end of 2012, we have no funding. So this  
18 operation will never transpire. They do not have  
19 funding at all. They have to fund themselves until  
20 2012 or 2016. This will never happen, ladies and  
21 gentlemen. You have to see where I'm coming from.  
22 I have to stand up as a resident of New Bedford. I  
23 have to come to these meetings and I have to voice  
24 my opinion in support. In reality, it's never going

H-029.03

1 to happen.

2 So I sit here and I applaud you for  
3 coming out and supporting your area, and I'm just  
4 giving my opinion as a humble taxpayer. I'm  
5 supporting mine. Don't worry. It's not going to  
6 happen in our lifetime.

7 (Laughter.)

8 (Applause.)

9 JOHN MONIZ: Michael Dukakis stood up  
10 25 years ago and said New Bedford was going to have  
11 a South Coast Rail, and every governor since then  
12 has said we're going to have a rail to New Bedford.  
13 I'm 34, and when they started saying it, I had a  
14 full head of hair. Not happening.

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you.

16 JOHN MONIZ: There is no funding.

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Sally  
20 Kos. You didn't stay within the lines. Is she  
21 here?

22 K0 -- it looks like K-0-S or K-0-G.

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Any Sallys?

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Yeah, from Westwood?

H-029.03

1 No.

2 Donald Bennett?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: He's not here.

4 MR. ROSENBERG: Kevin Sullivan?

5 Abdul Shibli?

6 Stephen Drown?

7 Is there anybody here that would like to  
8 speak, who did not fill out a card, but would like  
9 to now give their comment?

10 Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to  
11 reintroduce Colonel Howell with closing statements  
12 for today's meeting.

13 LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWELL: We have  
14 heard a great many thoughtful statements this  
15 evening. Careful analysis will be required before a  
16 determination can be made and a decision rendered.

17 Written statements may be submitted to  
18 the Corps of Engineers until 27 May 2011. They will  
19 receive equal consideration with those presented  
20 tonight.

21 Each question or issue raised will be  
22 addressed in our Final EIS regarding the  
23 Commonwealth of Massachusetts South Coast Rail  
24 permit application.



1           We at the Corps of Engineers extend our  
2       appreciation to all who took the time to involve  
3       themselves in this public review process.

4           And, finally, before I conclude this  
5       hearing, I'd like to extend my appreciation to the  
6       City of Mansfield and the Qualters Middle School for  
7       the use of this fine facility tonight, and the City  
8       of Mansfield Police Department for their support.

9           And once again, thank you all for taking  
10      the time to provide us with your thoughts, your  
11      comments, and your concerns tonight.

12           Good night. And thank you for coming.

13           (Applause.)

14  
15           (At 9:08 p.m., the public hearing was  
16      adjourned.)

ORAL STATEMENTS

JILL MACLEAN: My name is Jill Maclean, M-A-C-L-E-A-N. I'm the Assistant City Planner for the City of New Bedford, Massachusetts, and I'm the City of New Bedford's representative to the South Coast Commuter Rail Task Force. The address is 133 Williams Street, New Bedford, Mass., and that's City Hall, the Office of Planning.

I just want to clarify that Mass. DOT and the South Coast Rail Team were in New Bedford last week for -- meeting for a Q and A session, solely because I took the initiative as the Assistant City Planner and the Commuter Rail Task Force representative to ask them to come down.

I'm the one that put out the -- most of the promotional materials for this meeting to ensure that the citizens and the residents of New Bedford could be fully versed on this project and could take the opportunity to ask questions beforehand, knowing that there would not be much of a presentation during the actual Army Corps hearings. So, again, it was under my initiative and my asking that South Coast Rail Team came down to New Bedford and for no

H-030.01

1 other reason. They were not in the other towns  
2 because apparently the other towns did not take that H-030.01  
3 initiative themselves. So that's one.

4 And, secondly, I just want to state, for  
5 the record, that the City of New Bedford strongly  
6 supports the Stoughton Direct Alternative. The 70  
7 minutes to Boston is very important for commuters to  
8 Boston but also those doing a reverse commute.

9 It will improve our economic development  
10 opportunities in the City, as well as providing  
11 tourism opportunities, access to the amenities that  
12 we have on the South Coast. It's also important for H-030.02  
13 the connectivity of our region between the  
14 tri-cities of Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton  
15 and the regions in between.

16 We also view it as an opportunity for  
17 education, knowing that our students would be able  
18 to go to Bridgewater State, even Massasoit State  
19 College that offers different programs than may be  
20 available in New Bedford or at U. Mass. Dartmouth,  
21 as well, of course, as the universities in Boston  
22 itself.

23 Thirdly -- I lost my train of thought. H-030.03

24 My last point is that the cities of Fall

1 River and New Bedford are the only cities left in  
2 the Commonwealth of their size and population that  
3 do not have commuter rail service, and we believe  
4 that this is very inequitable for our cities; and  
5 over the decades, we've been promised this project  
6 again and again. It has not come to fruition. This  
7 time we actually have a governor that supports it,  
8 and this project has been made a priority, and due  
9 to that, there has been tremendous amount of  
10 planning that has taken place.

11 We've developed the South Coast Economic  
12 Development Corridor Plan, of which the City,  
13 through that plan, has also made some movements to  
14 already implement some of the recommendations.

15 The City of New Bedford has recently  
16 completed its first master plan since 1964. The  
17 Corridor Plan, along with the South Coast Rail  
18 Project, play a tremendous role in both our  
19 transportation and economic development sections of  
20 our master plan, and we continue now to revise and  
21 update our entire zoning code which includes the  
22 transit-oriented development locations at the Whale's  
23 Tooth station and the King's Highway station; and it  
24 also includes the zoning for transfer development



1 rights which could protect open space in other towns  
2 around us if the law is passed that we can use those  
3 development rights across town boundaries, which we  
4 are hopeful that it will, and we fully support that  
5 as well as part of this project.

H-030.03

6 That's it.

7 And I guess just, lastly, I would like  
8 to add that the citizens and the residents of the  
9 South Coast continue to pay and have paid for many  
10 decades for commuter rail service to every other  
11 section of the Commonwealth, as I previously stated,  
12 and yet, we still do not have it ourselves; and we  
13 feel that this is a grave instance of unfairness,  
14 and that we demand equity and rail service to the  
15 City of New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton.

H-030.04

16 Thank you.

17 DARSHAN MURPHY: My name's Darshan  
18 Murphy, D-A-R-S-H-A-N, Murphy, M-U-R-P-H-Y. I live  
19 at 34 Purchase Street, South Easton, Massachusetts.

20 This is a continuation of my prepared  
21 remarks from the meeting, however you want to type  
22 that out.

23 I wanted to also state that there is a  
24 lot of wetland to the opposite side of my property,

H-031.01

1 and they would have to extend into that wetland at  
2 least 100 feet, if not more.

3 And right now that wetland not only  
4 contains water but is the home for at least 100  
5 mallard ducks, and there's at least two to three  
6 nests. I missed that.

7 I too want to reiterate that I didn't  
8 know much about the meeting. It wasn't very well  
9 publicized. I certainly did not know there was a  
10 2,500-page report. I didn't even know the Army  
11 Corps of Engineers was ready, and they -- I thought  
12 that was another phase that hadn't happened yet; so,  
13 again, the dissemination of information is very  
14 poor.

15 I think they need to post signs even in  
16 the middle of towns. Like, on signs, it says, you  
17 know, a report's available or, you know, meetings or  
18 some kind of advertisement more than just a  
19 10-sentence paragraph, in a 10-page paper that only  
20 a percentage of the people get, because that's how I  
21 found out about the meeting.

22 I wanted to make a comment about another  
23 person's -- or about Kristina's report that this was  
24 supposed to be a 100-year project or that the

H-031.01

H-031.02

H-031.03

1 service could extend up to 100 years. I think  
2 technologically that's impossible, and that a  
3 reality check needs to be made on that.

H-031.03

4 Oh, and then they talked about how in  
5 the Hockomock Swamp that there would be some kind of  
6 raising of the train track or whatever, so that  
7 animals could pass underneath, and I want to make it  
8 very clear that animals probably will not pass  
9 underneath of that; and most likely for the type of  
10 environmental terrain that is, most animals are  
11 going to leave or vacate the zone in and around the  
12 track there because it's going to scare them, and  
13 you will have destroyed any habitat ability in that  
14 spot.

H-031.04

15 And then I ran out of time. I didn't  
16 get to say that like everyone else, for me and my  
17 family and the people around me that there's  
18 significant noise issues. There's significant  
19 vibration issues. There's significant pollutants,  
20 such as leaks from the train, and brake dust, et  
21 cetera. There will be significant emissions at my  
22 home, and I stated before that the train is less  
23 than 25 feet from my house.

H-031.05

24 And another thing not mentioned is that

H-031.06

1 if they decide to go with an electric train, there's  
2 a lot of EMF danger, and, again, with two children  
3 in my home, we don't want the EMF that close to our  
4 home because the -- again, the electrical lines will  
5 be within 25 feet of my home, and, again, those are  
6 all detrimental to my children.

7 Thank you.

8 SCOTT MARTIN: My name is Scott Martin,  
9 M-A-R-T-I-N. I live at 5 Porter Street, South  
10 Easton, Massachusetts 02375.

11 One additional comment I would like to  
12 make on the record is that learning of the improper  
13 notification methods that were used for tonight's  
14 meeting, I learned of when I arrived here.

15 I found out that there were postcards  
16 sent out to surrounding towns but Easton was not one  
17 of those that received it. Berkley and Canton were  
18 both towns that received postcards notifying them of  
19 this meeting. It would have been a much larger  
20 showing of Easton residents because the majority of  
21 them oppose this, and I think that it was an improper  
22 procedure to hold the meeting in Mansfield as well  
23 as not to notify people properly.

24 I think that another meeting should be

H-031.06

H-032.01



1 hold -- held as well as an extension on the deadline  
2 for comments; and I'd like to see that happen so  
3 that other Easton residents that were unaware of  
4 tonight's meeting could actually make their thoughts  
5 known.

6 Proper notification should go out  
7 throughout newspapers, web sites, signs in the town,  
8 postcards, mailings. For something this big and  
9 that costs this much money, I think the more people  
10 that are aware of it, the better and not hidden from  
11 the public.

12 Thank you.

13  
14  
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23  
24

H-032.01

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

\* \* \* \* \*

Written Statement of M. Abdul Shibli

From: Shibli, Abdul

Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2011

To: ccorona@easton.ma.us

Subject: Commuter rail through Easton

Dear Colleen,

It was nice talking with you this afternoon. As I mentioned to you, I have lived in South Easton for almost 24 years and have been following the developments relating to the commuter rail project since I moved from Boston to Easton to work as a professor at Stonehill College. Before I moved to Easton in 1987, for three years, I commuted to Stonehill from Boston. My wife, who graduated from Stonehill in 1990, commuted to Fall River for her job there in 1990-1991. I myself became a railroad commuter in 2000 when I started working for Harvard University and commuted until 2005 from

H-033.01

1 Mansfield to Harvard Square. I now work in Boston,  
2 but drive to work! My wife, who drove to Boston  
3 College for her MSW program, would have benefitted  
4 from a commuter rail system if it were available  
5 then!

6 I am also currently teaching an  
7 Economics course at Framingham State University and  
8 during my lectures, emphasize the benefits of public  
9 transportation given the price of gas, traffic  
10 congestion, and global warming trends.

11 So, as you can imagine, having a  
12 commuter rail through Easton would be good for young  
13 families like us. Even now, for me, for my kids,  
14 and also for my visitors. I have done some serious  
15 work as an environmental economist (particularly  
16 with one of Harvard's Environmental Policy programs)  
17 and understand the pro and con arguments of building  
18 a commuter rail system. I feel that given all the  
19 scrutiny this project has received over the last  
20 20 years (if not more), the economic, environmental,  
21 and developmental benefits for Massachusetts are  
22 overwhelming. Plus, as a resident, my family and I  
23 feel that this will be very beneficial to us. My  
24 son lives in Jamaica Plain and uses the public

H-033.01

H-033.02

1 transportation system when available. My daughter,  
2 who went to Tufts for her undergraduate (as a  
3 resident), and is an attorney working in NYC, is an  
4 avid train rider, and will be able to come and visit H-033.02  
5 us more often if she can catch a commuter train to  
6 North Easton from South Station! By the way, both  
7 attended the Public Schools in Easton.

8 I hope I have conveyed in this brief  
9 statement why I look forward to a rail connection  
10 that is economical and completed without any H-033.03  
11 additional impediments. Please feel free to contact  
12 me if you need more information or to provide  
13 additional supporting materials.

14  
15 Best regards,

16 M. Abdul Shibli.

17  
18 \* \* \* \* \*

19  
20 Written Statement of Randall H. Kunz, Chair  
21 Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic  
22 Development District  
23

24 May 4, 2011



1  
2 Mr. Alan Anachecka-Nasemann

3 Army Corps of Engineers

4 696 Virginia Road

5 Concord, MA 01742-2754

6  
7 Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr., EOEEA

8 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900

9 Boston, MA 02114

10 Attn.: MEPA Office (Aisling O'Shea)

11  
12 RE: Comments by SRPEDD on the Draft Environmental  
13 Impact Statement on South Coast Rail Released by the  
14 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

15  
16 Dear Mr. Anachecka-Nasemann and Secretary Sullivan:

17  
18 The Southeastern Regional Planning and  
19 Economic Development District (SRPEDD) voted  
20 unanimously on April 27, 2011 to commend the United  
21 States Army Corps of Engineers for a thorough and  
22 objective analysis of the South Coast Rail Project  
23 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft  
24 Environmental Impact Report, dated February, 2011.

H-034.01

1 SRPEDD supports the analysis in the  
2 report of both the transportation and environmental  
3 factors associated with the alternatives that were  
4 evaluated.

H-034.02

5 We agree that the Stoughton Route  
6 provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River,  
7 and New Bedford as measured by travel time and  
8 ridership. We support the Corps' findings that the  
9 operational obstacles associated with both the  
10 Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternative will make these  
11 alternatives infeasible. The fact that the  
12 Stoughton Route is served mostly by trains already  
13 in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an  
14 already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton  
15 Alternative the only viable choice from a  
16 transportation perspective.

H-034.03

17 SRPEDD is also in agreement that the  
18 Whittenton Alternative through the City of Taunton  
19 poses additional operational problems and should not  
20 be considered further. Specifically, the large  
21 number of grade crossings in Taunton will be  
22 unnecessarily disruptive and will add to the travel  
23 time, and thus lowering the ridership numbers.

H-034.04

24 SRPEDD further agrees with the analysis

H-034.05

1 of environmental factors, including wetlands, air  
2 quality, water resources, et cetera and supports the  
3 conclusion that the Stoughton Route performed best  
4 on the measure of environmental impact. The fact  
5 that the Stoughton Route follows rail beds that were  
6 in use a little over 50 years ago is an obvious  
7 factor in minimizing the environmental impact.

H-034.05

8 We are very familiar with the corridor  
9 as it passes through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC and  
10 agree with the conclusion that the wetlands impact  
11 will be limited, especially if the trestle is  
12 constructed. We would further request significant  
13 mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.

H-034.06

14 It should be pointed out that there are  
15 many factors beyond the project purpose that argue  
16 in favor of this project and in favor of the  
17 Stoughton Alternative. These factors include the  
18 smart growth benefits of this investment and the  
19 significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled and  
20 subsequent greenhouse gas reductions. The region  
21 also anxiously anticipates the projected economic  
22 benefits that will be associated with the  
23 restoration of commuter rail service to Southeastern  
24 Massachusetts.

H-034.07

1           We believe that based upon the information  
2       presented in the DEIS that the Least Environmentally  
3       Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) should be  
4       determined to be the Stoughton Alternative. SRPEDD  
5       further supports the electric alternative with its  
6       lower carbon footprint and faster travel time  
7       between South Coast and Boston.

H-034.08

8           SRPEDD urges the Army Corps and its  
9       partners to complete the review and make the  
10      determination of the LEDPA as expeditiously as  
11      possible. The region has been working on the  
12      restoration of commuter rail service for more than  
13      two decades, and we are anxious for the Corps to  
14      complete its review so that Mass. DOT can proceed  
15      with a financial plan and other aspects of this  
16      project.

H-034.09

17           Thank you for the opportunity to comment  
18      on this very important regional project.

19  
20      Sincerely,

21  
22      Randall H. Kunz, Chair

23      Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic  
24      Development District



1 c.c. Kristina Egan, Mass. DOT.

2  
3 \* \* \* \* \*

4  
5 Written Statement of Roy Nascimento

6 President and CEO

7 New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce

8  
9 Comments of Roy Nascimento

10 President and CEO

11 New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce

12  
13 Before a public hearing of the  
14 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on  
15 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
16 on South Coast Rail

17  
18 Wednesday, May 4, 2011

19 Quarters Middle School

20 Mansfield, MA

21 7:00 p.m.

22  
23 Good evening. I would like to thank you  
24 for the opportunity to comment today on the Draft

1 Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the U.S.  
2 Army Corps of Engineers for the South Coast Rail  
3 Project. My name is Roy Nascimento, and I am  
4 President and CEO of the New Bedford Area Chamber of  
5 Commerce.

6 The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce  
7 is a private, nonprofit business association that  
8 serves nearly 1,000 member businesses of all sizes  
9 from virtually all industries in ten communities in  
10 the South Coast region. Our mission is to serve the  
11 interests of member businesses while advocating  
12 business advancement, economic growth, and job  
13 creation for the benefit of New Bedford and the  
14 South Coast region of Massachusetts.

15 Let me begin by thanking and commending  
16 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners  
17 for a thorough and objective analysis of the South  
18 Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact  
19 Statement, dated February, 2011.

20 The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce  
21 remains a strong advocate for the extension of  
22 commuter rail service from Boston to New Bedford and  
23 other communities in the South Coast region of  
24 Massachusetts.

H-035.01

1           The Chamber agrees with the conclusions  
2           that identify the Stoughton Alternative as providing  
3           the best service to the communities in the South  
4           Coast region and providing the least environmental  
5           impact. The fact that the Stoughton Route is served  
6           mostly by trains already in service as opposed to  
7           dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled  
8           corridor make the Stoughton Alternative the only  
9           viable choice from a transportation perspective.  
10          Also, the fact that the Stoughton Route follows rail  
11          beds that were in use a little over 50 years ago is  
12          an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental  
13          impact.

H-035.02

14           We believe our final report should  
15           include double tracking the rail lines to provide  
16           future capacity and faster service. It is important  
17           that any design, permitting, and building of the  
18           rail service be completed with an eye towards  
19           enhancing or expanding the service in the future

H-035.03

20           In addition, the Chamber also believes  
21           that the travel time and frequency of service will  
22           be important factors to the success of this project.  
23           To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel  
24           time from the South Coast to Boston South Station be

H-035.04

1 nor more than 70 minutes. Shorter commuting time  
2 gives businesses greater access to more workers with  
3 specialized skills, while residents of the region  
4 gain connectivity to employment opportunities along  
5 the Route 128 corridor and in the business districts  
6 of Boston. We also encourage full service  
7 throughout the day to meet demand and encourage  
8 ridership. A minimum of three trains in the morning  
9 peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak  
10 period should be utilized. This includes full  
11 weekend service and inter-city service between  
12 Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River to encourage  
13 regional mobility. We would also like to see a late  
14 evening train service to Boston to be considered for  
15 residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service  
16 would help support our growing tourism economy by  
17 connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our  
18 national park, our ferry service to Martha's  
19 Vineyard, and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene  
20 here in the South Coast.

H-035.04

21 The Chamber believes commuter rail  
22 extension is critical to economic development and  
23 growth in the region and in keeping with long-range  
24 "Smart Growth" planning strategies that support the

H-035.05



1 environment and encourage development around  
2 priority development areas. Commuter rail extension  
3 to the South Coast will also help meet existing and  
4 future demand for public transportation and enhance  
5 regional mobility for residents, businesses, and  
6 visitors to the region by reducing congestion and  
7 increasing travel choice.

H-035.05

8 On behalf of our Chamber member businesses  
9 and their thousands of employees, we encourage the  
10 Army Corps and its partners to complete the review  
11 and make the determination of the Least  
12 Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative  
13 (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This is an  
14 important project for the South Coast region. The  
15 cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the  
16 largest municipalities within a 50-mile radius of  
17 Boston without rail transit service, service that  
18 will provide a much needed link between job  
19 opportunities and affordable housing for the  
20 residents of the state. We have been waiting for  
21 the restoration of this rail service for more than  
22 two decades, and we are anxious for this process to  
23 be completed, so that the state can move on to the  
24 next critical step in the project.

H-035.06

1                   Thank you. We appreciate your  
2                   consideration of our views on this very important  
3                   economic development issue.

4  
5                   Roy M. Nascimento, IOM  
6                   New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce

7  
8                   \* \* \* \* \*

9  
10                  Written Statement of Melanie-Jane Deware, Chairman  
11                  Easton Historical Commission

12  
13                 May 4, 2011

14                         The Easton Historical Commission  
15                   vehemently opposes the proposed commuter rail  
16                   service through our town for many reasons, including  
17                   its negative impact on numerous historic districts  
18                   and sites.

19                         The proposed route will bisect the North  
20                   Easton Village National Register District, the  
21                   Richardson National Landmark District, and the Ames  
22                   Local Historic District. Its proximity to these  
23                   districts as well as their associated buildings will  
24                   cause irreparable harm to them. The project is

H-036.01

H-036.02

1 ill-conceived on many levels. History cannot be  
2 mitigated.

H-036.02

3 The promised increase in revenue to  
4 local towns will not happen. How many people south  
5 of Raynham commute to Boston daily? The Taunton bus  
6 that transported folks from Fall River to Boston was  
7 cancelled due to lack of ridership. Do people from  
8 Fall River or New Bedford want to commute 1 1/2  
9 hours each way, every day, to go to work? A 2009  
10 report based on federal census data showed that only  
11 1.4 percent of the Fall River workforce took public  
12 transportation to work. Are the people who make up  
13 their above-average unemployment rate qualified for  
14 and able to afford the trip into Boston for jobs  
15 which don't even exist?

H-036.03

16 Using Brockton as an example: With  
17 three commuter stations, where are the promised  
18 mixed-use developments that the state predicted  
19 would magically appear around them? Associated data  
20 there shows that their residents' use of public  
21 transportation has not increased since the stations  
22 were built in 1997. The city's crime rate has  
23 increased. Could there be a connection?

H-036.04

24 There are also a myriad of safety issues

H-036.05

1 regarding grade crossings, a severe lack of safe and  
2 adequate parking, and permanent damage to the  
3 Hockomock Swamp to consider as well.

H-036.05

4 The whole idea is a bad one. Not enough  
5 people will use this rail line; it will cost  
6 billions that we don't have (funneling money from  
7 other pressing needs for repairs to roads and  
8 bridges and funding our schools); and it will create  
9 more unfunded maintenance costs. Additionally, the  
10 damage to local, state, and national historic sites  
11 will be devastating. Once our history is gone, it's  
12 gone. We urge you to reconsider this proposal and  
13 spare Easton and our neighbors from the costs and  
14 devastation to our history, environment, and  
15 communities.

H-036.06

16  
17 Mel anie-Jane Deware

18 Chai rman

19  
20 \* \* \* \* \*

21  
22 Written Statement of Priscilla Chapman

23 Taunton Watershed Advocate

24 Mass Audubon



1  
2 Comments to the  
3 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the  
4 Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office  
5 Regarding the South Coast Rail Project,  
6 Draft Environmental Impact Statement and  
7 Environmental Impact Report  
8 Public Hearing, May 4, 2011  
9 Priscilla Chapman, Taunton Watershed Advocate  
10

11 On behalf of Mass. Audubon, I submit the following  
12 preliminary comments on the Draft Environmental  
13 Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report,  
14 (DEIS/R) for the South Coast Rail Project, based on  
15 our review to date. Additional detailed comments  
16 will be submitted prior to the end of the public  
17 comment period. Mass Audubon is an abutter to the  
18 project through its ownership of the 954-acre  
19 Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeville  
20 which would be crossed by the proposed project. We  
21 have followed this project since 1997 and submitted  
22 previous comments to the Massachusetts Environmental  
23 Policy Act Office and the Army Corps of Engineers,  
24 and we have participated in the Commuter Rail Task

H-037.01

1 Force since 2007.

2 Mass. Audubon generally supports commuter  
3 rail improvements as an alternative to highway  
4 expansion and as a means to reduce emissions of  
5 greenhouse gases. We support the South Coast Rail  
6 Corridor Plan that identifies Priority Protection  
7 and Priority Development Areas as a means to achieve  
8 concentrated development on appropriate land in  
9 close proximity to transit and other infrastructure,  
10 preserve habitat, and reduce vehicle-miles traveled.

H-037.02

11 At the same time, this project bears careful review  
12 as it involves potentially significant adverse  
13 environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological  
14 significance and habitat for a number of state-listed  
15 species. This review needs to include sufficient  
16 information to ensure that impacts to those resources  
17 are avoided and minimized as much as possible and  
18 that unavoidable impacts are adequately mitigated as  
19 required by federal and state environmental laws.

20 Recognizing that the Massachusetts  
21 Department of Transportation has identified the  
22 Stoughton Route as its "preferred alternative," we  
23 focus our comments on the resource areas and  
24 projected impacts associated with that route,

H-037.03

1 including resources and impacts associated with the  
2 Southern Triangle of existing freight lines from  
3 Taunton to New Bedford and Fall River that are  
4 proposed to be upgraded, and the extent to which the  
5 DEIS/R demonstrates compliance with the requirements  
6 of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWPA),  
7 the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and  
8 the state and federal Clean Water Acts (CWA).

H-037.03

9 **Summary.** The DEIS/R does not provide  
10 adequate baseline information regarding potentially  
11 impacted natural resources, detailed mitigation  
12 plans for unavoidable impacts, and a detailed  
13 blueprint for implementation of the Corridor Plan to  
14 demonstrate that projected benefits of the Plan will  
15 materialize. The Scope for the Massachusetts  
16 Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review required that  
17 the Draft EIR include a detailed wetlands and rare  
18 species mitigation plan, but the DEIS/R states that  
19 the mitigation plan will be prepared at a later  
20 date. For these reasons, we request that you  
21 require preparation of a Supplemental Draft  
22 Environmental Impact Statement and Report (SDEIS/R).  
23 The following comments summarize our concerns. We  
24 will submit additional detailed comments by the end

H-037.04

1 of the comment period.

2 **Baseline information.** The DEIS/R fails  
3 to provide adequate baseline information regarding  
4 important resources and impacts to those resources  
5 by the project, especially in the Southern Triangle  
6 portion of the rail corridor. In addition to Mass.  
7 Audubon's land, the Southern Triangle lines also run  
8 through other sensitive areas, including public  
9 conservation lands owned by the Mass. Department of  
10 Conservation and Recreation in the Acushnet Cedar  
11 Swamp (an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and  
12 a National Natural Landmark). The Scope for the  
13 DEIS/R requires information on the number and  
14 location of stream crossings associated with each  
15 alternative (p. 27). During a site visit to the  
16 portion of the rail line that crosses the Assonet  
17 Cedar Swamp on November 16, 2011, conducted by three  
18 Mass. Audubon staff members, Project Director  
19 Kristina Egan, and other project staff, several  
20 culverts and streams that flowed along the  
21 right-of-way (ROW) were observed that are not  
22 identified in the DEIS/R. Although the Southern  
23 Triangle involves refurbishment and improvement of  
24 existing freight lines rather than entirely new



1 construction as in other portions of the project, it  
2 is nonetheless important to document resources and  
3 impacts along this portion of the route. In  
4 particular, it is important that the boundary  
5 between existing rail berms and wetlands be defined  
6 in relation to actual plans for the rail upgrading  
7 work so that impacts can be properly estimated and  
8 that the condition of culverts and bridges where  
9 water flows under the berm be documented to identify  
10 where these structures would need to be replaced.  
11 In this section of our comments on the Environmental  
12 Notification Form (ENF), we requested that the  
13 proponent complete a survey of all streams and  
14 culverts along the ROW. We reiterate that request.  
15 The DEIS/R should also provide construction details  
16 of all stream crossings where work is proposed to  
17 allow full evaluation of potential impacts.

H-037.05

#### 18 **Rare species and vernal pool surveys.**

19 The MEPA Scope required that "the DEIR should  
20 include an endangered species impact analysis based  
21 on adequate species survey and habitat assessment  
22 for each alternative based on consultations with  
23 NHESP..." It also called for consultations with  
24 NHESP, Mass. Audubon, and other impacted conservation

H-037.06

1 landowners in determining which areas should be  
2 field surveyed for wetlands and rare species (p. 24)  
3 To the best of our knowledge, no rare species  
4 surveys were conducted in sensitive areas along the  
5 existing New Bedford and Fall River ROWS, including  
6 the Assonet and Acushnet Cedar Swamps; nor can we  
7 find any record of consultation with NHESP or  
8 conservation landowners in the DEIR. The MEPA Scope  
9 also required that the DEIR "identify potential  
10 vernal pools, initially using maps and aerial  
11 photography and then verify in the field ..." It  
12 stated that "Potential vernal pool identification  
13 and certification should be conducted for areas  
14 within the right-of-way of the rail alignment and  
15 within a reasonable distance of the ROW ... The  
16 DEIR should include the result of vernal pool  
17 investigations, including a description and mapping  
18 of those meeting the criteria for certification"  
19 (p. 26). It appears that no new vernal pool  
20 investigation was conducted for the Southern  
21 Triangle. Table 4.14-5, "Vernal Pools Within 100  
22 Feet of South Coast Rail Alternatives" lists no  
23 vernal pools on the New Bedford line in the Assonet  
24 or Acushnet Cedar Swamps. At least one and possibly

H-037.06

1 two potential vernal pools were observed on the  
2 portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar  
3 Swamp during the above-referenced site visit.

H-037.06

4 Our written comments will provide a  
5 complete list of additional baseline information  
6 that should be included in an SDEIS/R, as required  
7 by the MEPA scope

H-037.07

8 **Impacts associated with the Stoughton**  
9 **Alternative.** The DEIS/R indicates that impacts  
10 associated with construction of the Stoughton  
11 Alternative will include:

12 11.9 acres of permanent wetlands  
13 alteration;

14 Filling of 1.7 acres of vernal pool and  
15 loss of 55 acres of supporting vernal pool buffer  
16 habitat;

H-037.08

17 3,480 feet of permanent alteration of  
18 bank;

19 Diversion of an intermittent stream that  
20 runs along the existing berm;

21 Loss of 32.5 acres of rare species  
22 habitat, including loss of Atlantic White Cedar  
23 Swamp that provides habitat for Hessel's Hairstreak  
24 butterfly, a state-listed species;

Barrier impacts to blue-spotted salamander and Blanding's turtle, both state-listed species.

H-037.08

The DEIS/R utilizes the University of Massachusetts "Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System" (CAPS) model to measure the loss of ecological integrity and biodiversity that would result from each alternative. Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to support plants and animals and the natural processes necessary to sustain them over the long term. The CAPS model creates a grid over the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and calculates the "index of ecological integrity" for each cell of the grid based on eight different ecological factors. The analysis indicates that the Stoughton Alternative would result in a major loss of ecological integrity. This loss would be 456.9 units, compared to 324.8 units for the Attleboro Alternative and zero for Rapid Bus. The CAPS analysis attributes a large portion of this loss to "indirect impacts." Habitat within the Hockomock Swamp has regenerated along the alignment of a rail line abandoned many decades ago - with the rails and ties removed and vegetation

H-037.09



1 regrowing to close the canopy in many locations. As  
2 the DEIS/R so clearly demonstrates, the proposed  
3 project is much more than reactivation of a former  
4 rail corridor. Reconstruction of the rail bed in  
5 the Hockomock Swamp would cut through "the largest  
6 unfragmented and pristine area of wetland habitat in  
7 eastern Massachusetts" (p. 4.14-6). Impacts are  
8 likely to include introduction of invasive plants,  
9 opportunistic predators, and changes in temperature  
10 of vernal pools and wetlands adjacent to the track  
11 from the creation of an opening in the canopy  
12 through the Hockomock Swamp. Regarding impacts to  
13 the Pine Swamp, the DEIS/R states "Reconstructing  
14 the rail could create a barrier to the movement of  
15 vernal pool organisms between pools or between  
16 breeding and non-breeding habitat;" also that  
17 "Reconstructing the track to require vegetation  
18 removal which could alter the microclimate of vernal  
19 pools close to the track" (P 4.14-87).

H-037.09

20 **Induced growth.** The DEIS/R also  
21 identifies projected impacts of induced growth and  
22 development from the project, compared to the "no  
23 build" scenario. Examples of the projected impacts  
24 are: increased vehicle miles traveled (VMTs);

H-037.10

1 increases in greenhouse gas emissions related to new  
2 dispersed development, and loss of forest and  
3 farmland. The Stoughton Alternative would add  
4 75,422 VMTs per day and 20,750 tons per year of  
5 greenhouse gas emissions and would increase loss of  
6 forestland by 575 acres and loss of farmland by  
7 313 acres over the "no-build" alternative. The  
8 DEIS/R acknowledges the likelihood that loss of  
9 forestland would also result in loss of carbon  
10 sequestration but does not quantify additional  
11 greenhouse gas emissions increases that would result  
12 as it should.

H-037.10

13 The DEIS/R states that these impacts  
14 would be reduced by implementation of the Corridor  
15 Plan and evaluates the degree of mitigation provided  
16 by "high" and "low" implementation scenarios. Mass  
17 Audubon supports vigorous implementation of the  
18 Corridor Plan. We are concerned that the DEIS/R  
19 fails to provide a detailed blueprint for that  
20 implementation to document that impacts of induced  
21 growth will, in fact, be offset, and other projected  
22 benefits will be provided. We request that a  
23 detailed implementation plan be developed and  
24 included in an SDEIS/R which includes a demonstrated

H-037.11

1 financial commitment to the needed state, regional,  
2 and local planning and land use regulatory reforms  
3 that will be needed to fully implement the Corridor  
4 Plan.

H-037.11

5 **Mitigation plans.** Despite the  
6 significance of the projected impacts, the DEIS/R  
7 fails to provide mitigation plans to replace lost  
8 resources and their functions and values. Without  
9 the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans,  
10 the public is unable to evaluate whether the project  
11 satisfies regulatory standards of the MWPA, MESA,  
12 and the state and federal CWA. The MEPA Certificate  
13 on the ENF for this project specifically required  
14 detailed description of proposed mitigation measures  
15 for impacts to rare species (p. 24), wetlands  
16 (p. 27) and biodiversity and wildlife (p. 29).

H-037.12

17 In some cases projected impacts may be  
18 difficult to mitigate. For example, attempts to  
19 replicate or restore Atlantic White Cedar Swamp have  
20 yielded mixed results in the past. Vernal pool  
21 species that encounter barriers to migration may not  
22 relocate to other pools. Rare species such as  
23 Blanding's turtle may decline if habitat is  
24 fragmented. Invasive plants, once introduced, may

H-037.13

1 be difficult to remove without continuous monitoring.

2 The NEPA/MEPA review should acknowledge the  
3 difficulties of these challenges and provide  
4 detailed mitigation plans with an evaluation of the  
5 likelihood of success in an SDEIS/R.

H-037.13

6 **Project cost and mitigation.** The MEPA  
7 Certificate required that the DEIS/R provide a  
8 detailed analysis of costs, including construction,  
9 operation and mitigation costs, for each of the  
10 alternatives (emphasis added), as well as an  
11 assessment of costs associated with implementation  
12 of the smart growth aspects of the project (p. 16).  
13 As noted above, the document lacks mitigation plans.  
14 The cost of mitigation cannot be estimated without  
15 the mitigation plans. The Certificate also required  
16 the DEIS/R to address how the project and the  
17 Corridor Plan will be financed; this analysis is not  
18 provided. An SDEIS/R should include the full cost  
19 of mitigation in total project costs and an  
20 explanation of how the project and Corridor Plan  
21 will be financed.

H-037.14

22 Thank you for considering these comments.

23  
24 Priscilla Chapman



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C E R T I F I C A T E

We, Marianne Kusa-Ryll, Certified  
Realtime Reporter, and Julie Thomson Riley, Certified  
Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that the  
foregoing transcript is a true and accurate  
transcription of our stenographic notes on May 4,  
2011, to the best of our knowledge, skill, and  
ability.

/s/ Marianne Kusa-Ryll  
Marianne Kusa-Ryll, RDR, CRR

/s/ Julie Thomson Riley  
Julie Thomson Riley, RDR, CRR

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

PERMIT APPLICATION PUBLIC HEARING  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
SOUTH COAST RAIL DEIS

MAY 5, 2011

KEITH MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

225 HATHAWAY BOULEVARD

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

7:00 p.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ROSENBERG: Good evening.

Good evening and welcome to this public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding the application submitted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, for a permit to discharge fill material in wetlands and waterways for the construction of a new passenger rail and other transportation facilities, connecting the terminal stations of Fall River and New Bedford with South Station in Boston.

My name is Larry Rosenberg. I'm the Chief of Public Affairs for the United States Army Corps of Engineers of New England, and I will be your moderator and facilitator this evening.

Our hearing officer tonight is Lieutenant Colonel Steven Howell, the Deputy District Engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers in New England.

Should you need copies of the public notice or any of the other pertinent information, it's available at the registration table, at the entrance to this hall.



1 I should point out that the Corps of  
2 Engineers has made no decision regarding the permit  
3 application request.

4 Okay. The agenda for this public  
5 hearing is following this introduction, Kristina  
6 Egan of the Massachusetts Department of  
7 Transportation will give a brief overview of the  
8 project.

9 Following Ms. Egan, our Hearing Officer  
10 Lieutenant Colonel Howell will address this hearing.  
11 Colonel Howell will then be followed by the Corps'  
12 permit manager who will discuss the Corps' role and  
13 an overview of the permit and following that, the  
14 Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office will  
15 review the role of the Commonwealth in this process.

16 Before we begin, I'd like to remind you  
17 of the importance of filling out these cards. These  
18 cards serve two purposes: First, they let us know  
19 that you're interested in the project, so we can  
20 keep you informed.

21 Second, they provide me a list of who  
22 wishes to speak this evening. If you did not  
23 complete a card but wish to speak or receive future  
24 information regarding the permit, a card will be

1 provided at the registration desk.

2 Now, as there are many here that have  
3 signed up to comment, we will provide three minutes  
4 to do so, no more; but as an added convenience, an  
5 additional stenographer is available just out the  
6 door, to the left, near the registration area should  
7 you wish to provide a comment on the record without  
8 the imposed time restriction.

9 These statements, along with any other  
10 written statements submitted, will receive equal  
11 consideration with those presented here this  
12 evening.

13 One additional comment: We are here  
14 to receive your comments, not to enter into any  
15 discussion of those comments or to reach any  
16 conclusion.

17 Any questions you have should be  
18 directed to the record and not to the individuals on  
19 the panel.

20 Thank you.

21 Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to  
22 introduce Kristina Egan who will give you an  
23 overview of the proposed project.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. EGAN: Thank you very much.

2 Good evening to all of you and thank you  
3 very much to the Army Corps of Engineers and to the  
4 Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office for  
5 allowing Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
6 this opportunity to present the project to all of  
7 you tonight.

8 I also want to thank all of you here  
9 tonight. The panel, of course, will be listening to  
10 your comments but so will Mass. DOT. We'll be  
11 taking them very seriously.

12 Tonight I am joined by Frank DePaola who  
13 is the Assistant General Manager of Design and  
14 Construction at the MBTA and is also doing the other  
15 job of being the acting highway commissioner. So  
16 we're very lucky to have him tonight.

17 The purpose of my presentation tonight  
18 is to give you a very brief overview of the project,  
19 and I'll give you a little insight as to how the  
20 Massachusetts Department of Transportation is  
21 interpreting the analysis that the Army Corp of  
22 Engineers has put forward in the Draft Environmental  
23 Impact Statement and report.

24 This project, South Coast Rail, is a top

1 transportation priority of the Patrick-Murray  
2 Administration because it addresses a long-standing  
3 inequity in transportation services within  
4 Massachusetts.

5 The Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton  
6 area have been disconnected from the economy of  
7 Boston, of the greater Boston area, and there's also  
8 been limited mobility due to the congestion on  
9 Route 24.

10 So one of the central purposes of this  
11 project is to provide more mobility, and we're  
12 estimating about eight to 9,000 riders per day will  
13 be using the system. This provides economic justice  
14 benefits to environmental justice populations as  
15 well as the broader communities in New Bedford and  
16 Fall River and the surrounding cities and towns.

17 We also estimate that there will be  
18 significant economic development benefits. We've  
19 done a study that shows that we can have about \$500  
20 million in new business sales every year just by  
21 connecting the economies of the cities with Boston.  
22 Because it's so congested, there is a disruption  
23 between the -- disruption between the labor market  
24 and employers. So this creates economic value just



1 by putting in mobility connection; and we're also  
2 estimating about 3,800 permanent new jobs resulting  
3 from the project.

4 The project also has environmental  
5 benefits. We're estimating that it will take about  
6 300,000 miles that are driven every day off the  
7 road. That's significant in air quality terms as  
8 well as in climate change terms.

9 An important component of the project is  
10 clustering homes and jobs near the transit stations  
11 and into downtowns, while preserving the farms, the  
12 fields, the forests that make the South Coast so  
13 special.

14 With "smart growth," which is what we're  
15 calling it, we were trying to implement a plan to  
16 help shape the growth that's coming into the area.  
17 We're estimating that there will be about 10,000  
18 fewer acres that would be developed on residential  
19 tracts.

20 We're estimating that about -- of that  
21 10,000, about 6,000 will be forest and 3,000 would  
22 be farmland that would be saved because of the  
23 project.

24 We would also reduce household water

1 consumption by about 21 gallons per day, which is  
2 significant in the South Coast region that faces  
3 some water issues.

4 In looking at how best to do this  
5 project -- where is Joe? Thank you.

6 Looking at how best to do this project,  
7 we have looked at a lot of different alternatives.  
8 We went out to the public, and we got 65 different  
9 alternatives. We looked at everything from running  
10 rail up from -- up through the Middleborough line  
11 here, to doing monorail and light rail, up the  
12 highway as well as the bus system, to using an old  
13 right-of-way that went here through Mansfield as  
14 well as going into Attleboro, backing up, and going  
15 up this way. We looked at 65 all together.

16 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
17 explores all these 65, but then looks at a narrower  
18 set of three corridors. We're looking at three main  
19 corridors: One is the Rapid Bus, which would use a  
20 zipper lane that goes up this way (indicating) and  
21 ties into 93, into South Station.

22 One that would use this rail corridor  
23 here, which is the Northeast Corridor, for AMTRAK  
24 and for the commuter rail. It goes over a new

1       bypass. This is new rail here, and it goes down to  
2       New Bedford and Fall River.

3               The last one is Stoughton. We extend  
4       service that's existing to Stoughton right now  
5       through an abandoned rail right-of-way down to  
6       Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford. There is a  
7       variation on that. It's called the Whittenton  
8       Alternative that would go this way, and over this  
9       way (indicating), and tie back up into Stoughton.

10              We're looking at electric and diesel  
11       as two different options for each of the rail  
12       alternatives.

13              In order to start the process of  
14       elimination, there are three different questions  
15       that have been asked to try and narrow down the  
16       alternatives. It's a three-step sequential process.

17              The first question is do these  
18       alternatives meet the project purpose? And we know  
19       that the bus actually gets caught in congestion, and  
20       it's going to be over an hour and a half long ride,  
21       which means that fewer riders are going to use it  
22       than the rail.

23              We're seeing with the rail alternatives  
24       doubling the ridership because the trip time is much

1 faster. In fact, if it was electric rail, it would  
2 be about an hour and 15 minutes. For diesel, it  
3 would be 10 more minutes. For Whittenton, it would  
4 be 11 to 12 more minutes because it is so serpentine  
5 as you go through this area of Taunton and up this  
6 way (indicating); so you add 10 to 12 minutes in  
7 that area. But what we do find is that it doubles  
8 the riders for all of the rail alternatives.

9 What you see down here in purple is a  
10 quotation from the Army Corps' analysis in the Draft  
11 Environmental Impact Statement, which basically  
12 indicates that the Rapid Bus does not perform.

13 So we're going to go to the second step  
14 in the sequential process of elimination of the  
15 alternatives. And the question is is it practicable,  
16 which is a technical word, but it basically means  
17 can it operate? Is it feasible to run? Is it cost  
18 effective?

19 So when we look at this, there are two  
20 main differences between the Attleboro Alternative  
21 and the Stoughton Alternative. The Attleboro  
22 Alternative runs along the Northeast Corridor. It  
23 is a heavily congested rail corridor. We would have  
24 to add 38 new trains a day to that corridor. In



1 order to do that, we would have to add a third track  
2 that runs all this distance (indicating), and then  
3 eventually, we would have to run a fourth track to  
4 eliminate a traffic jam that comes in this area.

5 When we looked at adding that fourth  
6 track, it added \$2.4 billion to the already high  
7 price tag of the Attleboro Alternative. We're  
8 looking at an over \$4 million project. We believe  
9 at Massachusetts Department of Transportation that  
10 this is impracticable. It is not something cost  
11 effective. It's not something that we can really  
12 invest in.

13 So the last question is which of these  
14 alternatives has the least amount of environmental  
15 damage. So if you did still have the bus on the  
16 table, and you did still have the Attleboro  
17 Alternative on the table, how would you compare the  
18 different environmental impacts of these?

19 There's been a lot of focus on the  
20 environmental impacts of the Stoughton Alternative.  
21 Surprisingly the analysis finds that far fewer  
22 wetlands acres would be impacted by the Stoughton  
23 Alternative. In fact, it's about half, and that is  
24 because we -- the other alternatives have to go

1 through wetlands areas also. They're less talked  
2 about in the public forum and in the media, but  
3 there's a lot of wetland impact that happens in this  
4 area and also along this bus corridor to put in a  
5 zipper lane.

6               So you get more acres of impact for  
7 the -- for the Attleboro Alternative and Bus  
8 Alternative. There are other resources that are  
9 important to evaluate too. There's species.  
10 There's other types of water issues. There's  
11 habitat fragmentation. And so you can't look at all  
12 acres as being equal; and not all wetland acres are  
13 created equal.

14              So, in particular, there's been a lot of  
15 focus on the Hockomock Swamp and the impact of the  
16 Hockomock Swamp. When we looked at the Hockomock  
17 Swamp, we decided that we really wanted to put the  
18 rail up on a trestle. The trestle is an elevated  
19 structure that will allow for animals to go underneath  
20 it. It reduces the fragmentation in the ecosystem.  
21 It's already fragmented because the old rail berm  
22 was there; so, the hydrology is different on either  
23 side.

24              So we want to try to do as much

1 connectivity as much as we can to try to connect  
2 the ecosystems and create a good passage for the  
3 different species there. We're able to do that  
4 through our design, and we found that our acres are  
5 really limited to just wetlands that have cropped up  
6 on the old right-of-way. We actually don't take any  
7 new wetlands in the Hockomock Swamp because we're  
8 able to confine our impact to where the right-of-way  
9 is right now.

10 I want to say one word about Whittenton  
11 versus Stoughton. And Whittenton's the variation on  
12 Stoughton. The Massachusetts Department of  
13 Transportation does not believe that the Whittenton  
14 Variation is the best alternative. It takes longer.  
15 It serves about the same number of people as the  
16 Stoughton Alternative, but it picks up less riders  
17 from Fall River and New Bedford, and we really need  
18 to serve those riders as well.

19 There are also an additional seven grade  
20 crossings, which raise some safety concerns, and  
21 there are noise impacts that would impact the  
22 environmental justice communities in the center of  
23 Taunton.

24 So, in conclusion, the Massachusetts

1 Department of Transportation believes that the best  
2 alternative is the Stoughton Alternative, either  
3 electric or diesel.

4 And we believe this project is a green  
5 project. It's a green project because it will yield  
6 air quality benefits. It will be part of the  
7 solution that we need for climate change. It will  
8 bring many economic development benefits to the area  
9 by connecting the economies of the cities with  
10 Boston, and it's a project that will yield these  
11 benefits for decades to come.

12 Again, I want to thank you all for  
13 coming tonight. We're looking forward to hearing  
14 your comments.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen,  
18 our Hearing Officer Lieutenant Colonel Steven  
19 Howell.

20 (Applause.)

21 LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWELL: I'd like  
22 to welcome you today to this public hearing on  
23 a request for permit by the Commonwealth of  
24 Massachusetts, Department of Transportation, for



1       their proposal to establish passenger rail service  
2       between Boston and the communities of New Bedford  
3       and Fall River, under Section 404 of the Clean Water  
4       Act.

5               Before we begin, I would like to thank  
6       you for involving yourself in this environmental  
7       review process. Please feel free to bring up any  
8       and all topics that you feel need to be discussed on  
9       the record. I assure you that all of your comments  
10      will be considered during this process.

11              I am Lieutenant Colonel Steve Howell,  
12      Deputy District Engineer for the New England  
13      District of the United States Army Corps of  
14      Engineers. Our headquarters is located in Concord,  
15      Massachusetts.

16              Other Corps engineer representatives  
17      with me tonight include Jennifer McCarthy, our  
18      regulatory -- Chief of Regulatory Division; Alan  
19      Anacheke-Nasemann, our Permit Project Manager; John  
20      Ashley, our Chief of Counsel; Kate Atwood, our Staff  
21      Archeologist; and Larry Rosenberg, our Chief of  
22      Public Affairs, who will facilitate tonight's  
23      meeting.

24              Tonight's hearing is being conducted as

1 part of the National Environmental Policy Act  
2 requirements and the Corps of Engineers' regulatory  
3 program solely to listen to your comments.

4 This request before us involves  
5 placement of fill in waters of the United States,  
6 including wetlands, in order to construct new public  
7 transportation facilities connecting the Cities of  
8 Fall River and New Bedford with South Station in  
9 Boston.

10 The proposed work would be located in  
11 wetlands on or adjacent to existing active or  
12 inactive rail or highway corridors in several towns  
13 in Southeast Massachusetts.

14 Wetlands and other waterway impacts  
15 would range between roughly 10.3 and 21.5 acres,  
16 depending on the alternatives selected. These  
17 impacts are dispersed along the roughly 60-mile  
18 transportation corridors between Boston and the  
19 terminal stations in New Bedford and Fall River.

20 The project facilities are subject to  
21 the jurisdiction of the Corps under Section 404  
22 of the Clean Water Act and the United States  
23 Environmental Protection Agency under Section 402  
24 of the Clean Water Act.

1           The Corps' jurisdiction for this  
2 proposed activity is limited to Section 404 of the  
3 Clean Water Act, which I will discuss in more detail  
4 in a moment.

5           The focus of this comment period and  
6 these hearings is to receive comments on the Draft  
7 Environmental Impact Statement and the proposed  
8 placement of fill material in the wetlands and  
9 waterways, the Corps' primary area of jurisdiction  
10 for this project.

11           I would like to briefly review the Corps  
12 of Engineers' responsibilities in this process.  
13 First, the Corps jurisdiction -- the Corps'  
14 jurisdiction in this case is Section 404 of the  
15 Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge of  
16 dredged or fill materials in waters of the United  
17 States, including wetlands.

18           Second, the detailed regulation that  
19 explains the procedure for evaluating permit  
20 applications and unauthorized work is Title 33, Code  
21 of the Federal Regulation, Parts 320 through 332.

22           Third, the Corps' decision rests upon  
23 several important factors to include Section 404(b)(1)  
24 of the Clean Water Act which stipulates that the

1 Corps can only issue a permit for the Least  
2 Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative or  
3 LEDPA for meeting the overall project purpose.

4 In addition, the Corps must reach the  
5 conclusion that issuance of a permit for the LEDPA  
6 is not contrary to public interest. Our decision  
7 will reflect the national concern for both the  
8 protection and utilization of important resources,  
9 to include the benefits that may reasonably occur  
10 from the proposal must be balanced against its  
11 reasonably foreseen detriments, and these factors  
12 will be considered in our determination on issuance  
13 of a permit; and all factors which may be relevant  
14 to the proposal will be considered prior to our  
15 making a decision, and those factors include but are  
16 not limited to conservation, economics, aesthetics,  
17 wetland values, fish and wildlife values, historic  
18 properties, recreation, water supply, food  
19 production, and, in general, the needs and welfare  
20 of the American people.

21 The Corps conducts a broad-based public  
22 interest review. This hearing is part of that  
23 review. All factors affecting the public will be  
24 included in our evaluation. Your comments will help



1 us reach a decision.

2 The DEIS was also prepared to serve as a  
3 joint Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, MEPA,  
4 and NEPA document to meet the procedural requirements  
5 of both the state and federal law and serve as a  
6 combined DEIS, Draft Environmental Impact Report.  
7 The State's MEPA review is being conducted  
8 simultaneously with the NEPA process.

9 Lastly, to date, no decision has been  
10 made by the Corps of Engineers with regard to this  
11 permit. It is our responsibility to evaluate both  
12 the environmental and socioeconomic impacts prior to  
13 our decision, and in order to accomplish that, we  
14 need your input.

15 The record of this hearing will remain  
16 open, and written comments may be submitted tonight  
17 or by mail until 27 May 2011. All comments will  
18 receive equal consideration.

19 I would now like to introduce my project  
20 manager, Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, who will give you  
21 more details on the Corps' role, and the information  
22 about the permit.

23 MR. ANACHEKA-NASEMANN: Thank you, sir.

24 Good evening and welcome. Thank you for

1 attending this hearing and participating in the  
2 Corps Draft Environmental Impact Statement or DEIS  
3 process.

4 My name is Alan Anacheke-Nasemann, and  
5 I'm the Senior Ecologist with the Corps, and the  
6 Project Manager for review of Mass. DOT's permit  
7 application.

8 I'm here to talk to you tonight about  
9 the Corps' role in South Coast Rail, the regulations  
10 we work under, and our DEIS process.

11 The US Army Corps of Engineers received  
12 an application for a permit from Mass. DOT to fill  
13 wetlands in order to construct new transportation  
14 corridors and facilities. All of the alternative  
15 transportation corridors cross wetlands and other  
16 waters of the United States.

17 Specifically, they would involve  
18 expansion of existing passenger, freight, and/or  
19 highway corridors into wetlands; reconstruction of  
20 rail lines on existing but abandoned railroad lines  
21 that contain wetlands; and/or construction of  
22 brand-new rail corridors into wetlands.

23 The Corps of Engineers has authority  
24 over this proposal under Section 404 of the Clean

1 Water Act. This law requires a Corps permit to  
2 discharge fill material into waters of the United  
3 States, including adjacent wetlands.

4 In reviewing this permit application, we  
5 must determine the Least Environmentally Damaging  
6 Practicable Alternative or LEDPA, ensure that that  
7 LEDPA will not cause or contribute to significant  
8 degradation of waters of the United States, perform  
9 a public interest review, and finally determine  
10 whether or not to issue a permit for the LEDPA.

11 With regard to South Coast Rail, please,  
12 keep in mind that the Corps of Engineers is a  
13 regulatory agency. We are not a sponsor of the  
14 project. We are a reviewing agency, not a funding  
15 agency. We are a neutral party in the review of  
16 every permit application we receive. We are neither  
17 a supporter, nor a proponent of any particular  
18 project.

19 The Corps' regulatory program is funded  
20 by Congress, and we are spending taxpayer dollars to  
21 review this proposal; however, we are not funding  
22 Mass. DOT or the construction of this project.

23 The Corps must determine the Least  
24 Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative,

1 but we do not have a preferred alternative. At the  
2 end of the process, the Corps is required to render  
3 a permit decision, but we are not required to  
4 resolve every issue or concern that you may have.

5 So, why is the Corps writing an  
6 Environmental Impact Statement? Because like all  
7 other federal agencies, we are subject to the  
8 National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA. This act  
9 requires that all federal agencies must ensure that  
10 environmental amenities and values may be given  
11 appropriate consideration in decision-making, along  
12 with economic and technical considerations.

13 Decision-making is the key phrase here.  
14 Specifically, a decision we must make is whether or  
15 not to issue a permit to Mass. DOT for this proposal.

16 NEPA stipulates that an Environmental  
17 Impact Statement is required when the proposal  
18 represents a major federal action with potentially  
19 significant impacts affecting the quality of the  
20 human environment.

21 One other aspect of NEPA is that it  
22 encourages the federal government to work with the  
23 state and local levels of government to prevent  
24 duplication of effort. So the Corps, in cooperation



1 with the Commonwealth, decided to write a joint  
2 Federal Environmental Impact Statement and State  
3 Environmental Impact Report.

4 The state and federal governments do  
5 have different processes, but the outcome is very  
6 similar. An environmental review document seeks  
7 to fully disclose the impacts of the alternatives  
8 under consideration. The major difference is that  
9 in a DEIR, the applicant names their preferred  
10 alternative.

11 As indicated in this document, DOT  
12 provided the preface where they have indicated their  
13 preferred alternative, but, again, the Corps of  
14 Engineers does not have a preferred alternative.

15 So our DEIS is a discussion of  
16 alternatives, but it is not a selection of a  
17 particular alternative. It is a full disclosure  
18 of the impacts of each alternative, but it is not  
19 a decision. Finally, it is a statement of the  
20 consequences of a permit to build the project, but  
21 it is not a permit itself.

22 Our comment period closes on May 27,  
23 2011. After that, the Corps will review all of the  
24 comments, request any additional data needed from

1 Mass. DOT to further identify impacts, and at that  
2 point write a Final Environmental Impact Statement,  
3 at which time we will name the Least Environmentally  
4 Damaging Practicable Alternative and provide a more  
5 detailed evaluation of that alternative.

6 After that, the Corps will write a  
7 Record of Decision and either issue a permit, issue  
8 a permit with conditions, or deny the permit.

9 To summarize, Section 404 of the Clean  
10 Water Act is our regulatory authority in this  
11 matter, and NEPA is our process for reviewing and  
12 evaluating the proposal and its environmental  
13 consequences.

14 Our proposal must run its full course  
15 before we can make a decision on this permit  
16 application.

17 I'd like to now introduce Aisling O'Shea  
18 from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental  
19 Affairs. Ms. O'Shea will give a brief overview of  
20 the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act process.

21 Aisling.

22 MS. O'SHEA: Good evening. I'd like to  
23 give you a brief overview of our MEPA process and  
24 some information on how to submit comments on the

1 Draft DEIR, and Draft DEIS.

2 The MEPA office is the Massachusetts  
3 Environmental Policy Act, and I just wanted to give  
4 you, for those that might not be familiar with it,  
5 just an overview of the purpose of our office and  
6 our review.

7 MEPA requires that state agencies and  
8 any other proponents study the consequences of their  
9 actions including the potential environmental  
10 impacts of the project that's being proposed, and  
11 that the proponent also looks at all -- studies  
12 alternatives and looks at all possible measures to  
13 avoid and minimize impacts to the maximum extent  
14 feasible and where impacts are avoidable, to develop  
15 appropriate mitigation.

16 Our thresholds for review can be found  
17 on our website and in our regulations. Not all  
18 projects are subject to MEPA review, but typically  
19 there are -- the requirements include that a project  
20 trips one of our thresholds and needs a state  
21 action. In this case, the proponent is a state  
22 agency, and there are a number of state permits  
23 required.

24 For -- the other thing I wanted to

1 highlight was the -- part of the MEPA process, of  
2 course, is to make sure that there is public input  
3 in the process. We don't -- MEPA office doesn't  
4 approve or deny a project. The purpose of our  
5 review is to ensure full disclosure and public input  
6 and an environmental impact assessment that's  
7 conducted and that's adequate. The decision that  
8 the secretary will make eventually at the end of  
9 this part of our review process is on the advocacy  
10 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

11 Now, the Environmental Impact Report  
12 itself is the primary mechanism for collecting the  
13 information and for making it available for public  
14 review. The Draft Environmental Impact Report, as  
15 Alan mentioned, is a combined document that has been  
16 submitted to serve both the federal and state  
17 information needs.

18 Just to give you a sense of some of the  
19 thresholds that are relevant for this project where  
20 it requires a mandatory Environmental Impact Report.  
21 One of them being the impacts to wetlands and  
22 alteration of more than one acre of bordering  
23 vegetative wetlands trips a threshold for a  
24 mandatory EIR.



1           It also requires a variance from the  
2 Wetlands Protection Act, and so that's one of the  
3 permit requirements; and as many of you are aware,  
4 there are some state-listed species potential  
5 impacts associated with the project, and the various  
6 alternatives that would require a Conservation and  
7 Management permit from Natural Heritage and  
8 Endangered Species Programs. So the project is  
9 subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered  
10 Species Act as well.

11           So just a brief on where we are today in  
12 terms of the review. Some of you may have been  
13 involved earlier at the Environmental Notification  
14 Stage which was a couple years ago. The secretary  
15 issued the certificate on April 3, 2009, which laid  
16 out the scope of work for the Draft Environmental  
17 Impact Report, and this is the document that we have  
18 now which we will be reviewing in the context of  
19 that scope; and to the extent that all of the  
20 requirements from the scope are met, we'll welcome  
21 all of your comments that you may have on the  
22 document itself, on the alternatives, any comments  
23 you may have on them, on mitigation, and other  
24 impacts. So that will help feed into our review.

1           As I mentioned earlier, we don't approve  
2       or deny a project. The part of this -- the MEPA  
3       review will help state agencies in making their  
4       decisions and providing information that they need.  
5       State agencies -- for projects that are subject to  
6       MEPA review and need the EIR, the state agencies  
7       have to make a Section 61 finding under MEPA, under  
8       the act, to make a statement that, yes, all of the  
9       impacts have been avoided and minimized to the  
10      maximum extent, and that mitigation's appropriate.  
11      So this review process and your input will help in  
12      scoping what additional information analysis might  
13      be needed for the Final EIR.

14           Now, typically, under MEPA for EIRs,  
15      there's a 30-day comment period. There is a  
16      provision of the regulation to extend typically not  
17      more than 30 days. This project we have a 65-day  
18      public comment period, and we've coordinated the  
19      dates to coincide with the Corps as well; so,  
20      comments to MEPA are also due on May 27, and they  
21      should be submitted in writing. Obviously we'll  
22      take into account, you know, everything we hear  
23      tonight, but under the MEPA regulations, we do  
24      require that if you want your comments to be on

1 the record with the Commonwealth, that they are  
2 submitted to the secretary in writing.

3 And just in terms of timeline, probably  
4 a month, about a month afterwards, we're scheduled  
5 for June 29th, that once we've reviewed all the  
6 comments and completed our review of the documents  
7 and consulted with agencies, et cetera, the  
8 secretary will be issuing a certificate, and that  
9 will determine, you know, the adequacy of the Draft  
10 EIR and lay out the scope of work for Final EIR.

11 So this is information here on where to  
12 submit your comments. I also wanted to draw your  
13 attention to a handout on the table outside at the  
14 DOT's table, which has that information also and my  
15 contact information. Feel free to call or e-mail if  
16 you have questions afterwards. We take comments by  
17 fax, e-mail, or regular mail; and then DOT's  
18 brochure, I believe, also has information on  
19 submitting comments to MEPA.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen, it  
22 is crucial to this public process that your voice is  
23 heard, and we're here to listen, to listen to your  
24 comments, understand your concerns, and to provide

1       you an opportunity to put your thoughts on the  
2       record, should you care to do so.

3               The hearing tonight will be conducted in  
4       a manner that all who desire to express their views  
5       will be given an opportunity to do so.

6               To preserve the right of all to express  
7       their views, I ask, one, there be no interruptions;  
8       and two, that all speakers abide by the time  
9       restrictions, so that all who wish to speak will  
10      have an opportunity.

11              We do not wish to have one individual  
12      deny others the rights to express their opinions and  
13      their views on the proposed project. Furthermore,  
14      in order to make any decisions regarding this permit  
15      application, we, the United States Army Corps of  
16      Engineers need to have you involve yourself in this  
17      environmental review, not just tonight but  
18      throughout the entire process.

19              When you came in, copies of the public  
20      notice and procedures to be followed this evening  
21      were available. If you did not receive these, both  
22      are still available at the registration area, at the  
23      entrance to the hall. I will not read either the  
24      procedures or the public notice, but they will be



1 entered into the record.

2 A transcript of this hearing is being  
3 prepared. And the record will remain open, and  
4 written comments may be submitted tonight or by  
5 mail, up until May -- up and to and including  
6 May 27, 2011. All comments receive equal  
7 consideration. Anyone who wishes to send written  
8 comments should forward those comments to our  
9 headquarters in Concord, Massachusetts.

10 Lastly, I'd like to reemphasize that  
11 the Corps of Engineers has made no decision with  
12 regards to this permit. It is our responsibility  
13 to fully evaluate the Massachusetts Department of  
14 Transportation's proposed activity and its impact  
15 on the aquatic resources prior to any decision.

16 Please note that the Corps does not have  
17 a preferred alternative and has not yet selected a  
18 permissible transportation route at this time.

19 The Corps must first identify the Least  
20 Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.  
21 That's where it starts. The process will not be  
22 completed until the Final Environmental Impact  
23 Statement is released.

24 Now, although the Massachusetts

1 Department of Transportation has a very ambitious  
2 schedule for the completion of the necessary  
3 environmental reviews and the permitting, the Corps  
4 of Engineers has not developed a schedule for the  
5 preparation of the Final EIS. The timing of the  
6 Final EIS and our Record of Decision are contingent  
7 upon the public comments we receive and the data  
8 that needs to be gathered to fill any data gaps.

9 Again, we are here to receive your  
10 comments and not to enter into any discussion of  
11 those comments or to reach any conclusion.

12 Any questions you have should be directed  
13 to the record and not to the individuals on the  
14 panel.

15 So if there's no objection from the  
16 Hearing Officer, I will now dispense with the  
17 reading of the public notice of this hearing, and  
18 I'll have it entered into the record.

19 LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWELL: (Nods.)

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

21 \* \* \* \* \*

22  
23 PUBLIC NOTICE  
24

US Army Corps of Engineers®

New England District

696 Virginia Road

Concord, MA 01742-2751

Comment Period Begins: March 23, 2011

Comment Period Ends: May 27, 2011

File Number: NAE-2007-00698

In Reply Refer To: Alan Anacheke-Nasemann

Phone: (978) 318-8214

E-mail: SCREIS@usace.army.mil

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**Department of the Army Permit Application, Notice of  
Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
and Announcement of Public Hearings: Proposed South  
Coast Rail Project, Massachusetts Department of  
Transportation.**

The District Engineer has received a permit  
application from the applicant below to conduct work  
in waters of the United States as described below.

**APPLICANT:** Massachusetts Department of Transportation,  
10 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02116

1  
2 **ACTIVITY:** Discharge fill material into waters of the  
3 United States, including adjacent wetlands. All  
4 work is incidental to installation of transportation  
5 infrastructure (rail and/or road grades) for  
6 proposed commuter passenger public transportation  
7 service. A detailed description of the proposed  
8 activity is provided below. This work is proposed  
9 in waters of the United States, including adjacent  
10 wetlands, along existing active or abandoned  
11 railroad, new track on lands currently not used as a  
12 transportation corridor, and/or highway grades  
13 between Boston and the Cities of New Bedford and  
14 Fall River, Massachusetts.

15  
16 **AUTHORITY**

17 Permits are required pursuant to:

18 \_\_\_\_Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899

19 XXSection 404 of the Clean Water Act

20 \_\_\_\_Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research  
21 and Sanctuaries Act).

22  
23 The New England District, US Army Corps of Engineers  
24 (Corps) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact



1 Statement (DEIS) to evaluate the proposed  
2 establishment of commuter passenger transit service  
3 between Boston and the cities of New Bedford and  
4 Fall River, MA. The DEIS has been prepared pursuant  
5 to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental  
6 Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the  
7 Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR  
8 parts 1500-1508), in response to this Department of  
9 the Army permit application.

10  
11 The DEIS has also been prepared to serve as a Draft  
12 Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to satisfy the  
13 requirements of the Massachusetts Environmental  
14 Policy Act (MEPA; 301 CMR 11.00 et seq.). The MEPA  
15 review is being conducted simultaneously with the  
16 NEPA process.

17  
18 The joint DEIS/DEIR evaluated a range of alternative  
19 transportation routes. Alternative routes evaluated  
20 in detail included three principal rail routes and  
21 one bus route: (1) the "Attleboro Alternative," (2)  
22 the "Stoughton Alternative," (3) the "Whittenton  
23 Alternative," and (4) the "Rapid Bus" Alternative.  
24 A No Build/Transportation Surface Management

1 alternative was also evaluated. Additional  
2 permutations, including a "Middleborough Rail -  
3 Rapid Bus Hybrid" and an "Attleboro Fourth Track"  
4 configuration were also examined.

5  
6 Two Public Hearings will be held, as follows:

- 7  
8 1. Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 7:00 P.M., Qualters  
9 Middle School, 240 East Street, Mansfield, MA  
10 2. Thursday, May 5, 2011, 7:00 P.M., Keith Middle  
11 School, 225 Hathaway Blvd, New Bedford, MA

12  
13 Registration for each hearing will begin at  
14 6:00 P.M. on the dates and locations listed above.

15  
16 In order to properly evaluate the proposal, we are  
17 seeking public comment. Anyone wishing to comment  
18 is encouraged to attend one of the hearings noted  
19 above or submit written comments. **Written comments**  
20 **must be received no later than: Friday May 27, 2011.**

21 Written comments can be sent to Mr. Alan  
22 Anacheke-Nasemann, Project Manager, US Army Corps of  
23 Engineers, New England District, Regulatory  
24 Division, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA, or by

1 email to: SCREIS@usace.army.mil. Written comments  
2 may also be turned in to Corps staff during the  
3 public hearings noted above. All comments will be  
4 considered a matter of public record. Copies of all  
5 comments will be forwarded to the applicant.

6  
7 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Alan  
8 Anacheke-Nasemann, (978) 318-8214, email:  
9 SCREIS@usace.army.mil.

10  
11 **Background.** Section 404 of the Clean Water Act  
12 requires a Department of the Army (DA) permit for  
13 the discharge of dredged or fill material into  
14 waters of the United States, including adjacent  
15 wetlands. MassDOT has submitted an application for  
16 a DA permit to discharge fill material into waters  
17 of the U.S. incidental to establishment of commuter  
18 public transportation service between Boston and the  
19 cities of New Bedford and Fall River, MA, and known  
20 as "South Coast Rail." Impacts to waters of the  
21 U.S. would range in area from approximately 10.3  
22 acres to approximately 21.5 acres, depending on the  
23 alternative selected. The overall project purpose  
24 is to more fully meet the existing and future demand

1 for public transportation between Fall River/New  
2 Bedford and Boston, MA and to enhance regional  
3 mobility. The cities of New Bedford, Fall River and  
4 Taunton, Massachusetts are reportedly the only  
5 cities within 50 miles of Boston not currently  
6 served by commuter passenger rail service. The  
7 project envisions up to approximately 9600 passenger  
8 daily trips between Boston and New Bedford/Fall River.

9  
10 The DEIS is intended to provide the information  
11 needed for the Corps to perform a public interest  
12 review for the Section 404 permit decision.

13 Evaluation of impacts of the various alternatives  
14 will include application of the guidelines of  
15 Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act. Issues  
16 analyzed in the DEIS include impacts to water of the  
17 U.S. (including vernal pools and other wetlands);  
18 transportation, land use; socioeconomics,  
19 environmental justice, visual effects, noise,  
20 vibration, cultural resources; air quality; open  
21 space; farmland, hazardous materials, biodiversity;  
22 threatened and endangered species; and water  
23 resources. Several alternatives were evaluated for  
24 comparative purposes, including the No-Action



1 Alternative under which no new transportation would  
2 be built.

3  
4 **Alternatives.** The "Attleboro Alternative" would add  
5 new service via the existing AMTRAK® Northeast  
6 Corridor, with added capacity, new track and  
7 existing freight lines, from Boston via Attleboro  
8 and Norton to Taunton. The new track ("Attleboro  
9 bypass") would be laid in the Town of Attleboro,  
10 near Chartley Pond in the vicinity of an existing  
11 National Grid electrical line right-of-way. This  
12 alternative would add approximately 20 new trains to  
13 the existing Northeast Corridor between Attleboro  
14 and Boston. Eight new commuter rail stations would  
15 be constructed (Barrowsville, Downtown Taunton,  
16 Taunton Depot, King's Highway, Whale's Tooth,  
17 Freetown, Fall River Depot, and Battleship Cove) and  
18 major reconstruction would occur at three existing  
19 commuter rail stations (Canton Junction, Sharon,  
20 Mansfield).

21  
22 The "Stoughton Alternative" would extend the  
23 existing Stoughton commuter rail line from its  
24 current terminus in Stoughton along presently

1     abandoned railroad rights-of-way through Easton and  
2     Raynham to Taunton. This would follow an existing,  
3     abandoned railroad grade that crosses Hockomock  
4     Swamp and Pine Swamp to the east side of Taunton.  
5     This alternative would add 4 new trains and would  
6     otherwise extend existing trains farther south from  
7     Stoughton to New Bedford and Fall River. Ten new  
8     commuter rail stations would be constructed (North  
9     Easton, Easton Village, Raynham Place, Taunton,  
10    Taunton Depot, King's Highway, Whale's Tooth,  
11    Freetown, Fall River Depot, and Battleship Cove) and  
12    major reconstruction would occur at two existing  
13    commuter rail stations (Canton Center and  
14    Stoughton).

15  
16    The "Whittenton Alternative" is a variant of the  
17    Stoughton Alternative, and would extend the existing  
18    Stoughton commuter rail line from its current  
19    terminus in Stoughton along presently abandoned  
20    railroad rights-of-way through Easton and Raynham to  
21    Taunton. This would follow the existing, abandoned  
22    railroad grade that crosses Hockomock Swamp and then  
23    an abandoned, serpentine (winding) railroad grade to  
24    the west side of Taunton. This alternative would

1 add 4 new trains and would otherwise extend existing  
2 trains farther south from Stoughton to New Bedford  
3 and Fall River. Ten new commuter rail stations  
4 would be constructed (North Easton, Easton Village,  
5 Raynham Place, Downtown Taunton, Taunton Depot,  
6 King's Highway, Whale's Tooth, Freetown, Fall River  
7 Depot, and Battleship Cove) and major reconstruction  
8 would occur at two existing commuter rail stations  
9 (Canton Center and Stoughton). The Whittenton  
10 Alternative was the most recent route for passenger  
11 rail service between Stoughton and Taunton, last  
12 used in ca. 1958.

13  
14 Continuation of all three rail alternatives from  
15 Taunton would follow existing, active freight lines  
16 through Lakeville and Freetown to New Bedford and  
17 Fall River. These links between Taunton and New  
18 Bedford/Fall River are common to all three rail  
19 alternatives identified above.

20  
21 The "Rapid Bus" Alternative would provide commuter  
22 bus service, in lieu of rail, from New Bedford, Fall  
23 River and Taunton to South Station via I-93, Route 24,  
24 and Route 140. North of I-495, buses would use a

1 combination of new zipper bus lanes, new reversible  
2 bus lanes, two-way bus lanes, existing zipper HOV  
3 lanes and existing HOV lanes, along with a short  
4 section in mixed traffic. South of the I-495  
5 interchange in Raynham, buses would travel in the  
6 general purpose lanes with mixed traffic. Bus  
7 Stations would be located at Whale's Tooth and  
8 King's Highway in New Bedford, and in Fall River,  
9 Freetown, Downtown Taunton and Galleria (Taunton).

10  
11 The approximate locations of the proposed build  
12 alternative transportation alignments and rail  
13 station locations are shown on the enclosed plan  
14 entitled "Figure 4.15-11: South Coast Rail Project  
15 Alternative Alignments," and details of the proposed  
16 impacts to waters of the United States are identified  
17 in the DEIS/DEIR, Chapter 4.16 (Wetlands).

18  
19 The No-Build Alternative would provide enhancements  
20 to existing bus services with limited improvements  
21 to the existing transit and roadway system, but  
22 otherwise no major infrastructure improvements.

23  
24 The decision whether to issue a permit will be based



on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which may reasonably accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural value, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain value, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Comments received will be addressed in the Final

1 Environmental Impact Statement and considered by the  
2 Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue,  
3 modify, condition or deny a permit for this  
4 proposal. Comments are used to assess impacts on  
5 endangered species, historic properties, water  
6 quality, general environmental effects, and the  
7 other public interest factors listed above.

8  
9 **Mitigation:** Implementation of a mitigation plan to  
10 compensate for unavoidable losses to aquatic  
11 resource functions will be required if a permit is  
12 issued. The DEIS/DEIR provides a conceptual outline  
13 of MassDOT's proposed mitigation program; however  
14 specific mitigation measures have not been  
15 identified at this point.

16  
17 **Section 106 Coordination:** All of the proposed  
18 alternative routes would affect historic and  
19 cultural resources, including properties eligible  
20 for listing on the National Register of Historic  
21 Places, National Historic Landmarks, and historic  
22 districts that have cultural importance in the  
23 affected communities. Consultation with the State  
24 and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices on the

1 extent of the impacts on these resources is ongoing  
2 as part of the NEPA and §404 review processes,  
3 pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic  
4 Preservation Act, as amended.

5  
6 **Endangered Species Consultation:** The New England  
7 District, Army Corps of Engineers has reviewed the  
8 list of species protected under the Endangered  
9 Species Act of 1973, as amended, which might occur  
10 at the project site. It is our preliminary  
11 determination that the proposed activity for which  
12 authorization is being sought is designed, situated  
13 or will be operated/used in such a manner that it is  
14 not likely to adversely affect any federally listed  
15 endangered or threatened species or their designated  
16 critical habitat. By this Public Notice, we are  
17 requesting that the appropriate Federal Agency  
18 concur with our determination.

19  
20 **Coastal Zone Management Act:** The State of  
21 Massachusetts has an approved Coastal Zone  
22 Management Program. Where applicable the applicant  
23 states that any proposed activity will comply with  
24 and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent

1 with the approved Coastal Zone Management Program.  
2 By this Public Notice, we are requesting the State's  
3 concurrence or objection to the applicant's  
4 consistency statement.

5  
6 **Availability of the DEIS/DEIR:** Interested parties  
7 may view and download the DEIS/DEIR online at:  
8 [http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm)  
9 [SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm](http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/southcoastrail.htm). A printed copy  
10 of the document is also available to review at each  
11 of the following locations:

- 12  
13 1. State Transportation Library of Massachusetts  
14 10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor, Boston, MA
- 15 2. Russell Memorial Library, 88 Main Street,  
16 Acushnet, MA
- 17 3. Attleboro Public Library, 74 North Main, Attleboro,  
18 MA
- 19 4. Berkley Public Library, 3 North Main Street,  
20 Berkley, MA
- 21 5. Boston Public Library, Central Library,  
22 700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA
- 23 6. Thayer Public Library, 798 Washington Street,  
24 Braintree, MA



- 1        7. Canton Public Library, 786 Washington Street,  
2            Canton, MA
- 3        8. Dedham Public Library, 43 Church Street, Dedham, MA
- 4        9. Ames Free Library, 15 Barrows Street, North  
5            Easton, MA
- 6        10. Fall River Public Library, 104 North Main  
7            Street, Fall River, MA
- 8        11. Boyden Library, 10 Bird Street, Foxborough, MA
- 9        12. James White Memorial Library, 5 Washburn Rd.  
10           East Freetown, MA
- 11       13. Lakeville Public Library, 4 Precinct Street,  
12           Lakeville, MA
- 13       14. Mansfield Public Library, 255 Hope Street,  
14           Mansfield, MA
- 15       15. Milton Public Library, 476 Canton Avenue,  
16           Milton, MA
- 17       16. New Bedford Free Public Library, 613 Pleasant  
18           Street, New Bedford, MA
- 19       17. Norton Public Library, 68 East Main Street,  
20           Norton, MA
- 21       18. Thomas Crane Public Library, 40 Washington  
22           Street, Quincy, MA
- 23       19. Turner Free Library, 2 North Main Street  
24           Randolph, MA

20. Raynham Public Library, 760 South Main Street,  
Raynham, MA

21. Sharon Public Library, 11 North Main Street,  
Sharon, MA

22. Stoughton Library, 84 Park Street, Stoughton, MA

23. Taunton Public Library, 12 Pleasant Street,  
Taunton, MA

24. West Bridgewater Public Library, 80 Howard  
Street, West Bridgewater, MA

The following authorizations have been applied for,  
or have been, or will be obtained:

(X) Permit, License or Assent from State.

(X) Permit from Local Wetland Agency or  
Conservation Commission.

(X) Water Quality Certification in  
accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

THIS NOTICE IS NOT AN AUTHORIZATION TO DO ANY WORK.

Jennifer L. McCarthy  
Chief, Regulatory Division

\* \* \* \* \*

MR. ROSENBERG: A transcript of this hearing is being made to assure a detailed review of all the comments. A copy of the transcript will be available in our Concord, Massachusetts headquarters for review, on our website for your use, or you may make arrangements with the stenographer for a copy at your own expense.

Individuals speaking today will be called to the microphone in the order they signed in and as provided by our hearing protocol that was distributed in the reception area.

When making the statement, come forward to one of the microphones. One's located on each aisle. State your name, and then the interest you represent.

And as I said, as there are many who wish to provide comment, you will be provided three minutes to speak, no more. Once again, please keep to this time restriction, so you will avoid denying others the right to speak.

Thank you.

Now, this traffic signal behind me

1 indicates the following: The green light -- when  
2 the green light comes on, it will indicate that you  
3 have two minutes remaining. When the amber light  
4 comes on, you have one minute left, and, of course,  
5 when the red light comes on, that indicates your  
6 time has expired.

7 Please identify if you're speaking for  
8 or representing a position of an organization. If  
9 you speak for yourself, just say that.

10 I want to emphasize again that all who  
11 wish to speak will have the opportunity to do so;  
12 and once again, we have an additional stenographer  
13 located outside the hearing room should you wish to  
14 dictate an individual statement for the record  
15 without the time restrictions.

16 We will now begin to receive your  
17 comments according to our hearing protocol.

18 Our first speaker tonight will be Mayor  
19 Scott Lang, and Mayor Lang will be followed by  
20 Senator Mark Montigny.

21 MAYOR SCOTT LANG: Good evening. Thanks  
22 very much for coming to New Bedford. We sincerely  
23 appreciate it. We welcome the Army Corps and all  
24 the officials that are here tonight.



1 I want to speak in favor of the South  
2 Coast Rail Project. I want to speak in favor of the  
3 Hockomock Route. I want to lay it out very, very  
4 quickly for you.

H-038.01

5 The first thing that I want to emphasize  
6 is that this is a very important economic development  
7 project for our area. It is also an important  
8 project for the state.

9 This will provide immediate jobs in the  
10 planning and building of the rail and then provide  
11 jobs along the rail itself. It will allow us to  
12 move individuals rapidly north and south.  
13 Eventually we would hope that the United States  
14 would continue to build and will go east and west as  
15 well.

H-038.02

16 We believe it moves passengers as well  
17 as freight. We have looked at this project for a  
18 very long period of time. We are now one of the  
19 fastest growth areas in the state, and it's  
20 absolutely something that's vital to continue this  
21 economic development.

22 The second thing that I would like to  
23 say is that this is a matter of social, economic,  
24 and environmental justice for everyone in the state.

H-038.03

1 If you traveled on 195, 140, 24, 93, you know that  
2 that -- that these roadways, in essence, will be  
3 obsolete with \$4-a-gallon gasoline, with the fact that  
4 we have tremendous concerns about the environment,  
5 and the fact that it is nearly impossible to move,  
6 without denigrating the quality of life of all our  
7 citizens because of the time frames involved. Having  
8 rapid mass transportation by way of rail from our  
9 section of the state, north/south is extremely  
10 important.

H-038.03

11 The last or the number of other things  
12 that I want to say is that we don't believe an  
13 extension is warranted. We've been waiting for this  
14 project for decades, and we believe a May 27th  
15 deadline is completely appropriate. This entire  
16 project has been open, transparent, and public  
17 engagement has started from the first day, about  
18 four years ago.

H-038.04

19 I've been to so many meetings in which  
20 the public's been involved, in which routes have  
21 been vetted, checked, that it would not be right to  
22 continue with an extension.

23 The other thing that I will say -- and  
24 I've got a yellow light now -- is that we don't want

H-038.05

1 an iron horse built. This is the 21st Century. We  
2 believe electric, fast start, fast stop, get us to  
3 Boston or get us north quickly.

4 Environmentally friendly is appropriate.  
5 This rapid mass transit by way of rail, to go by  
6 diesel continues to have us depend on oil, have us  
7 continue to pollute the environment. It doesn't  
8 make sense, and 10 years later we'll be looking to  
9 try and convert to electric trains.

10 So let's build a 21st Century product  
11 with the tech that has people, as I've said before,  
12 from Tokyo saying I want to ride the rail from  
13 New Bedford to Boston.

14 So I thank you. This is of utmost  
15 importance for our region, and we hope that you will  
16 act expeditiously and favorably to this project.

17 Thanks very much.

18 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
21 Senator Mark Montigny who will be followed by State  
22 Representative Antonio Cabral.

23 SENATOR MARK MONTIGNY: Thank you,  
24 folks. For the record, I am Senator Mark Montigny.

H-038.05

H-038.06

1 I represent about 160,000 folks, not only their  
2 aspirations, but in this case, several thousand of  
3 whom I think I represent tonight their frustrations.

4 I want to say first to you, Lieutenant  
5 Colonel, thank you for your service to the United  
6 States of America; and to all the staff of the Army  
7 Corps, we appreciate your indulgence.

8 (Applause.)

9 SENATOR MARK MONTIGNY: I understand  
10 last night that there was some folks who did what we  
11 all tend to do express some frustration. I think  
12 not in my backyard is a natural instinct. I'd like  
13 to suggest tonight that you'll hear from folks that  
14 are passionate and are saying, please, put it in our  
15 backyard.

H-039.01

16 We've been saying it for decades, some  
17 of us, in my case, longer than I care to admit. I  
18 will just cite a couple of instances so you'll  
19 understand that although we're excited and passionate,  
20 we're also frustrated.

21 In 1991, Governor Weld looked at me at a  
22 podium when I was President of the Fall River  
23 Chamber of Commerce and said if you don't have  
24 commuter rail by 1997, sue me. I've been looking to

H-039.02



1 sue his trust fund for over a decade. It hasn't  
2 worked.

H-039.02

3 In two thousand -- excuse me -- in 1993,  
4 the Secretary of Transportation said sure, Senator,  
5 if you can earmark the money for a study, we will  
6 gladly study the Attleboro Alternative, and then two  
7 years later, you can do it again if that doesn't  
8 work, and we'll study the Stoughton Route, and I  
9 said, no thank you and earmarked three and a half  
10 million dollars, and we studied these alternatives  
11 that you are looking at tonight, in 2011. So we are  
12 frustrated.

H-039.03

13 A succession of governors didn't include  
14 the Army Corps unfortunately. This governor, a true  
15 champion of the project, was wise enough to understand  
16 that it required cooperation.

H-039.04

17 I want to say one thing very clearly.  
18 It's been studied to death. We ask you not to  
19 extend the comment period. We ask you to do as  
20 you're capable. We know you're thorough, and we  
21 will win from that, but we ask you to do this within  
22 the year, and we know that you can do it in even  
23 less time.

H-039.05

24 There is no question in our minds

H-039.06

1 because we've participated in literally hundreds of  
2 meetings and watched this study after study by very  
3 competent environmental experts. The Stoughton  
4 Route is the alternative. The Whittenton -- I'll  
5 call it the Whittenton Delay Option is not a  
6 feasible alternative.

H-039.06

7 And the only thing that we would ask  
8 understand that we truly believe that this is not  
9 only an issue of economic justice. We understand  
10 what it will do, and I will say to you unequivocally  
11 it is the most important economic project for this  
12 region. I would suggest also looking at the  
13 environmental aspects. There is nothing that will  
14 do more to take thousands of cars off the road every  
15 day than this project.

H-039.07

16 And, lastly, quoting economists that sat  
17 before me as the Chairman of Ways and Means in the  
18 Senate and suggested the singular -- singularly the  
19 biggest challenge to the economic development of  
20 Massachusetts, not the South Coast, was, in fact,  
21 the lack of growth in the workforce because of a  
22 congested capital city and a cost of living that was  
23 unbearable for most; and they suggested, without  
24 provocation from me as a champion of this project,

H-039.08

1 that commuter rail to the South Coast for a variety  
2 of reasons would help solve that issue.

3 So I close by again thanking you for  
4 your indulgence, but I ask that you expedite the  
5 process. We have waited far too long. The project  
6 works. It is necessary, and we need it quickly.

7 Thank you very much for your time.

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

11 The next speaker is Representative  
12 Antonio Cabral, who will be followed by State  
13 Representative Stephen Canessa.

14 REPRESENTATIVE ANTONIO CABRAL: Thank  
15 you. For the record, it is State Representative  
16 Antonio Cabral, from the City of New Bedford.

17 Good evening and welcome to New Bedford  
18 and thank you for your extraordinary thorough Draft  
19 Environmental Statement and your report.

20 I'm here to support the South Coast  
21 Rail. We've been working on this project, as the  
22 Senator said, for several decades now. We don't  
23 believe that the date of May 27 should be extended,  
24 and we believe strongly that the Stoughton Route is

H-039.08

H-040.01

1 the most effective, the most cost-effective, the  
2 most fastest route for us to get to Boston, and we  
3 don't need any buses. We have already buses from  
4 New Bedford and I believe from all the other cities  
5 in Southeastern Mass.

H-040.01

6 This project would mark a turning point  
7 for us. It's certainly, as the Mayor said, one of  
8 the biggest economic projects that we could have in  
9 our region and in our city, particularly, New  
10 Bedford. As you know, the Cities of New Bedford,  
11 Fall River, and Taunton are the only cities of their  
12 size in the eastern half of Massachusetts without  
13 rail service of any kind.

H-040.02

14 How can you have cities like ours not  
15 connected to the biggest city, not only in  
16 Massachusetts, the biggest city in New England, the  
17 biggest economic engine of New England. It's like  
18 we were saying all roads used to lead to Rome, but  
19 we need to be connected to Boston by rail.

20 There's no other -- there is no  
21 coincidence why we have some of the highest  
22 unemployment rates in New England. This project  
23 will allow our cities to take advantage of our many  
24 strengths, to build our prosperity, based on our

H-040.03



1 strengths, as the mayor has said and others have  
2 said before.

H-040.03

3 I want to briefly address the concerns  
4 you heard last night in Mansfield. I can understand  
5 the disappointment of someone who took the risk of  
6 purchasing a home along existing railroad tracks,  
7 hoping that the tracks wouldn't be used. They used  
8 to be used only a few years ago. The last time the  
9 rail was used was 1959.

H-040.04

10 No one likes to lose the battle, but I  
11 believe the opposition of those living along the  
12 tracks, the northern stretch of the proposed  
13 Stoughton Route, does not reflect views even of a  
14 majority of those community residents, much less the  
15 majority of our region's residents.

H-040.05

16 In 2007, the residents of both Raynham  
17 and Easton voted against opposing this project  
18 through a local referendum, directed their elected  
19 leaders to instead work with the state to mitigate  
20 any impact to their communities.

21 As for Environmental Impacts, your  
22 report makes clear that the actual impact to the  
23 land and wetlands are much smaller than even the  
24 projects' strongest supporters, like myself,

H-040.06

1 believe. You point out, for instance, that the  
2 project would affect only, only half of an acre of  
3 wetlands in the Hockomock Swamp.

4 On the other hand, the project would  
5 take more than 8,000 cars off the roads of  
6 Southeastern Massachusetts every day and eliminate  
7 62,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from our atmosphere.

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank  
9 you very much.

10 Since you have a longer statement, I  
11 invite you to use the stenographer out there, but,  
12 please, sir, make sure that we get a copy of that  
13 statement.

14 REPRESENTATIVE ANTONIO CABRAL: I will  
15 be submitting written comments before the 27th both  
16 to you and to MEPA.

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ANTONIO CABRAL: Thank  
19 you.

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
23 State Representative Stephen Canessa, and he will be  
24 followed by State Representative Christopher Markey.

1                   REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN CANESSA: Good  
2 evening. And first I want to thank you for this  
3 important public hearing. I know it's a very  
4 critically important part of this process; so, I do  
5 want to thank you and acknowledge you for hosting a  
6 hearing in New Bedford.

7                   I'm going to be brief because I know  
8 that you've heard from us, and when I say us, the  
9 delegation on several occasions regarding our  
10 position on this issue.

11                  You'll undoubtedly hear from many people  
12 on this issue. I know you've heard from several  
13 last night. You'll hear from several tonight, and  
14 as this process unfolds through May 27th, I'm sure  
15 you'll hear from quite a few; and those who you'll  
16 hear from will have a variety of views, for a  
17 variety of reasons. They will be opposed. They  
18 will be in favor, and they will express their  
19 opinions.

20                  Please keep in mind that when -- there  
21 are some folks who may be opposed in this process  
22 who already benefit from rail service. The New  
23 Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton region currently do  
24 not benefit from this service, and I certainly think

H-041.01

1 that is something that our region does deserve.

H-041.01

2 We've expressed the frustration at times  
3 regarding the length of time of this process;  
4 however, I do want to very sincerely thank you and  
5 show my extreme appreciation for the thoroughness  
6 and the detail that you put into this, what as I  
7 think have been a --

H-041.02

8 MS. EGAN: DEIS.

9 REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN CANESSA: -- the  
10 two-year DEIS project. I do think that in the long  
11 run, that will be an extreme benefit for all of us  
12 in this region.

13 I do want to go on record in support of  
14 the Stoughton Extension for a variety of reasons,  
15 which includes economic development, accessibility  
16 for the residents of this area, and also educational  
17 opportunities, which could be achieved for the  
18 residents of this area in the greater Boston region.

H-041.03

19 I do also want to publically thank  
20 Kristina Egan who has been absolutely wonderful in  
21 this process as well.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

24 (Applause.)



1 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
2 State Representative Christopher Markey who will be  
3 followed by Mayor Charles Crowley, Mayor of Taunton.

4 REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER MARKEY:  
5 Thank you for the opportunity to be here this  
6 evening.

7 I'm educated as a lawyer, and I look at  
8 things and try to be as logical as I can, and I know  
9 you, your group, the Army Corps has taken a lot of  
10 heat for the extension of the time of your  
11 evaluations and your report. However, I must say  
12 that that time, I think, in the end -- at the end of  
13 the day is going to be the savior and the effort  
14 that you put into it in preventing significant  
15 litigation for this case -- this project.

H-042.01

16 The thoroughness of that, the ability  
17 for you to dissect the entire project in bits and  
18 pieces, and at the end of the day when you look at  
19 the Stoughton line, and you realize that it's only  
20 impacting one half acre of wetlands is significant.

H-042.02

21 And I think that everyone should be  
22 grateful for the opportunity that you have given  
23 us to review those documents and to take a look at  
24 the opportunity -- the opportunities that exist; and

H-042.03

1 I would just say to you the environment will not  
2 be hindered or would not be affected to the degree  
3 if it went down to the Attleboro line or the  
4 Middleborough line. The most effective, both  
5 environmentally and economically, is the Stoughton  
6 line; and I would just say from the history of the  
7 Army Corps and if anybody understands the economic  
8 impact of a significant state and federal  
9 infrastructure development it is the Army Corps.

H-042.03

10 I said it during my most recent campaign  
11 if you look about 25 miles to the east of us, the  
12 Cape Cod Canal, those bridges were built before we  
13 even had highways, before most people even had cars.  
14 The idea now that we're going to develop some type  
15 of commuter rail all the way down to New Bedford  
16 when every other area has it, it's not novel. It is  
17 simply the most effective way for our state to  
18 develop, and it's the most effective way for our  
19 community to seek serious, serious economic  
20 development, something that will tie us into Boston.

H-042.04

21 I hope that you seriously consider the  
22 Stoughton line. I think it's the most effective way  
23 environmentally and economically; and I gratefully,  
24 on behalf of my constituents, thank you for making

H-042.05

1 such a thorough document that's going to push this  
2 thing forward. Thanks again for your time and  
3 efforts.

4 And, Kristina Egan, I can't thank you  
5 enough for your efforts and your ability to be fair  
6 and impartial throughout the whole process.

7 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker is  
10 Mayor Charles Crowley. The Mayor will be followed  
11 by Jean Fox.

12 MAYOR CHARLES CROWLEY: Thank you very  
13 much. It's a pleasure to be here to speak to you  
14 again on my support, my enthusiastic support for  
15 South Coast Rail for Southeastern Massachusetts.

16 It is -- we look forward in Taunton to  
17 be the gateway to the South Coast because the one  
18 thing that I've emphasized here everyone talks about  
19 it having the benefit it will be for us here down  
20 in the South Coast to get to Boston to enjoy the  
21 amenities there, but I think there's so many  
22 qualities in Southeastern Massachusetts that we  
23 believe that many people from Boston should be able  
24 to come down to enjoy those qualities that we have

1 down here, the attractions down here. Let's expose  
2 those elements in here, in Southeastern Mass., to  
3 the people in Boston, and I think they'll enjoy what  
4 we have down here.

H-043.02

5 But I'm enthusiastically in support,  
6 along with my constituents, for the Stoughton Route,  
7 the direct Stoughton Route. It has been a railroad  
8 bed, a railroad coming through there since 1845, all  
9 the way down to the last train in 1959, the last  
10 passenger train. It's gone through the Hockomock  
11 Swamp. It's not like we're putting a path through  
12 the swamp that has been, you know, on a virgin type  
13 of swamp area. It's been there since 1845, and far  
14 more detrimental locomotives, from an environmental  
15 standpoint, than they have today. So we believe  
16 that's the most attractive route.

H-043.03

17 If it takes me an hour and 15 minutes to  
18 go through one of these obscure routes like Attleboro  
19 and the Whittenton Alternative to get to Boston, and  
20 it's quicker for me to get the car, I'm going to  
21 still take the car; so, all the investment will be  
22 worth nothing.

H-043.04

23 It makes sense to build the direct route  
24 through the Stoughton Route, and that's the one we

H-043.05



1 enthusiastically endorse. The Attleboro Route has  
2 15 grade crossings. If we were to take that, plus  
3 the time element there, it would devastate our  
4 community as it would crisscross the area where -- a  
5 highly congested area where the houses are virtually H-043.05  
6 as close as if you put the train down the corridor  
7 here. The houses are right there. You can stick  
8 your hand out the train, you'll probably hit the  
9 houses. The mitigation efforts on that would be  
10 enormous, in my opinion.

11 The Whittenton Alternative is 14 grade  
12 crossings in our city and crisscrosses the city. It  
13 would interfere with public safety response H-043.06  
14 vehicles, ambulances, and so forth like that in our  
15 community.

16 The Stoughton Route only has five grade  
17 crossings, and it adds two stations, one for the  
18 downtown area, the historic district, where it would  
19 be, as well as the regional station behind the H-043.07  
20 Target store. It would allow people to be able to  
21 take advantage of this, not only locally but  
22 regionally.

23 I think it's the best thing that's ever  
24 happened there. I applaud the Governor for taking

1 the initiative to put his efforts and his money  
2 where his mouth is. He's been very refreshing.

3 And also, Kristina Egan, she's been a  
4 champion of this project, and I applaud her efforts  
5 too.

6 I thank you, and count me as absolutely  
7 in favor of this, along with our 56,000 people from H-043.08  
8 the City of Taunton.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker will be  
13 Jean Fox, who will followed by Jane Gonsalves.

14 JEAN FOX: Thank you. I am Jean Fox,  
15 Freetown Selectman, resident of Freetown, and I'm  
16 also with the Greater New Bedford Workforce  
17 Investment Board.

18 I want to thank you very much for  
19 inviting us all here, for having this hearing. I am H-044.01  
20 personally in favor of an electric train along the  
21 Stoughton Route.

22 I'm not in favor of any extension of the  
23 public comment period as all salient information has H-044.02  
24 been available since the fall of 2009, with little,

1 if any, new information since that time being made  
2 available. Any delay will negatively impact access  
3 to important federal funding.

H-044.02

4 South Coast Rail is South Coast  
5 Renaissance. It's the rebirth of this nation's  
6 vitality and promise. It means accessibility. It  
7 means jobs. It opens up the region to tremendous  
8 economic development potential, connecting employers  
9 and businesses to our most noteworthy resource, our  
10 human resource. For the first time in close to a  
11 century, it provides a public link between the South  
12 Coast and the rest of the state.

H-044.03

13 For the region's workforce and economy,  
14 commuter rail is a boon. It offers jobs,  
15 transportation options, reciprocal connectivity,  
16 and an important economic shot in the arm with  
17 implications that stretch far beyond the South  
18 Coast.

19 For station sites, South Coast Rail has  
20 a chance to undertake smart growth -- smart growth  
21 strategies that weave development with cultural  
22 heritage all within the parameters of community  
23 engagement and environmental stewardship, through  
24 the identification of priority development and

H-044.04

1 priority protection areas.

2 South Coast Rail has already proven its  
3 mettle, bringing key stakeholders to the table,  
4 promoting smart growth, assessing public transit in  
5 the aggregate, rather than in silos, encouraging  
6 extensive public comment and input. Technical  
7 assistance support has allowed Freetown and other  
8 communities to move ahead with transit-oriented  
9 design and development.

10 New Bedford has three bridges that are  
11 being renovated and readied for the train thanks to  
12 TIGER grant funding, obtained through South Coast  
13 Rail, and for the 31 communities involved, extensive  
14 examination of impacts and benefits has been  
15 accomplished.

16 Thanks to the efforts of the Governor,  
17 the Lieutenant Governor, Kristina Egan, SRPEDD and  
18 the South Coast Rail Task Force, as well as all the  
19 communities, we are where we are, and we need to  
20 continue the momentum.

21 I am strongly in favor of the Stoughton  
22 Alternative, and I thank you for this extensive  
23 study, and we're ready to move forward.

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.



1 (Applause.)

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Jane  
3 Gonsalves who will be followed by David Kennedy.

4 JANE GONSALVES: Good evening. I'm Jane  
5 Gonsalves. I'm a member of the New Bedford City  
6 Council.

7 I'm here to speak in favor of South  
8 Coast Rail, and, in particular, the Stoughton Route.  
9 I'd like to advise you that the New Bedford City  
10 Council has already gone on record in support of  
11 South Coast Rail and the Stoughton Route, and if you  
12 haven't seen the letters yet, you should be seeing  
13 them shortly. We took a vote on that at our last  
14 City Council meeting, one of many votes.

H-045.01

15 The City Council of New Bedford has been  
16 a strong, staunch supporter of the rail extension to  
17 Southeastern Massachusetts. It certainly is an  
18 important economic development tool for this area.  
19 It will give us the ability to seek more work  
20 opportunities in the Boston area. The route, as you  
21 know, according to the documents that have already  
22 been published, has less environmental impact than  
23 other routes and also a quicker travel time.

H-045.02

24 It is a critical, critical piece of our

H-045.03

1 economic recovery in this area, and I consider it a  
 2 matter of economic justice for this area, since New  
 3 Bedford/Fall River are the only cities of their size  
 4 that do not have access to mass transportation in  
 5 the form of rail in the State of Massachusetts.

H-045.03

6 I'd also say that the City Council is  
 7 not in favor of an extension of time for this  
 8 process. We believe that those documents having  
 9 been available on the website since the fall of 2009  
 10 have given the public adequate opportunity to make  
 11 comment at this time; and, further, that the delay  
 12 and extension of time would affect South Coast  
 13 Rail's ability to access federal transportation  
 14 funding, and we appreciate your meeting with us in  
 15 New Bedford, so we can give you our comments here.

H-045.04

16 And I also want to comment on Kristina  
 17 Egan's wonderful ability to work on this project and  
 18 gather support and work to make it a reality.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker is  
 23 David Kennedy, who will be followed by Derek Santos.

24 DAVID KENNEDY: Good evening, and thank

1 you. My name is David Kennedy, and I appear this  
2 evening as a life-long resident of New Bedford,  
3 currently serving as the City Planner.

4 I wish to express my strong support for  
5 the recently completed South Coast Rail DEIR,  
6 prepared by the Army Corps. This report is probably  
7 the most thorough evaluation of a proposed  
8 transportation initiative that I have ever reviewed  
9 in my 35 years of public service.

H-046.01

10 Fifty years ago, the intent of public  
11 rail service was simply to connect New Bedford to  
12 Boston. The current proposal seeks to establish new  
13 economic opportunity along the entire 50-mile  
14 corridor. The proposed commuter rail service is  
15 being intentionally planned to maximize economic  
16 benefit to all 31 communities along its route. This  
17 initiative overcomes long-standing environmental  
18 justice issues by reestablishing transportation  
19 equity to the South Coast just as other gateway  
20 communities have benefitted from statewide.

H-046.02

21 The DEIR examines, in great detail, how  
22 the most practicable environmental alternative, the  
23 proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative is the least  
24 damaging solution in creating job access, lessening

H-046.03

1 urban and suburban sprawl, and anticipating the  
2 consequences of impending climate change on a  
3 regional level.

H-046.03

4 With the uncontrollable rise in fuel  
5 prices, there's no better time in American history  
6 than the present to move this transportation project  
7 forward.

H-046.04

8 The Corridor Planning Study underwent  
9 a robust civic engagement process, meeting in over  
10 100 different settings while examining dozens of  
11 alternative routes, economic variables, and  
12 scenarios.

13 It appears that the Stoughton  
14 Alternative has risen as the preferred, most  
15 practical alternative, affording convenient,  
16 reliable Boston access within 70 minutes.

17 New Bedford has recently completed a  
18 comprehensive master plan. Consistent with this,  
19 plan abundant reference to the reestablishment of  
20 commuter rail is acknowledged in the transportation,  
21 economic, and educational sections. This particular  
22 rail project will complete the City's intermodal  
23 port to rail capacity.

H-046.05

24 The City has also begun a long-awaited

H-046.06



1 rezoning process to become consistent with this  
2 proposed rail corridor plan. This effort has  
3 produced two transit-oriented development sites here  
4 in New Bedford.

H-046.06

5 In closing, I respectfully urge you and  
6 the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental  
7 Affairs to support this Stoughton Alternative as the  
8 Corps continues onward towards the initiation and  
9 swift completion of a Final EIR.

H-046.07

10 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker will be  
13 Derek Santos, who will be followed by George Smith.

14 DEREK SANTOS: Good evening. My name is  
15 Derek Santos.

16 I'm here speaking tonight not only as a  
17 life-long resident of New Bedford but an incredibly  
18 proud resident of the City, on behalf of Matthew  
19 Morrissey, the Executive Director of the NBEDC, who  
20 is this evening with an expert team from the EDA,  
21 who are here in New Bedford exploring the connection  
22 of our fishing industry and its impact on our  
23 overall economic environment and growth here in New  
24 Bedford.

1           The New Bedford Economic Development  
2 Council would like to take this opportunity to  
3 provide comment on the Draft Impact Statement for  
4 the South Coast Rail Project, proposed by the  
5 Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

6           The EDC fully supports South Coast Rail,  
7 and specifically supports the proposed Stoughton  
8 Electric Alternative as the most viable alternative,  
9 with the least impact to wetlands and wildlife.

H-047.01

10          As the lead economic development agency  
11 for the City of New Bedford, the NBEDC has a mission  
12 to work in partnership at the city, state, and  
13 federal levels to promote sustainable job retention  
14 and creation for New Bedford citizens.

15          To achieve this mission, we are  
16 implementing a balanced, aggressive, and  
17 multifaceted growth strategy of which the  
18 reestablishment of commuter rail service to Boston  
19 is a critical component.

H-047.02

20          As such, this project is a central  
21 element to our transportation goals outlined in the  
22 city's master plan, New Bedford 2020, and will serve  
23 as a catalyst for private investment and job  
24 creation for decades to come.

1           The proposed Stoughton Electric  
2 Alternative will spur targeted economic growth along  
3 the entire corridor, creating 2,000 jobs and 228  
4 million in private investment in New Bedford alone  
5 by the project's completion in 2030.

H-047.03

6           Today we are now constructing three rail  
7 bridges for the project through TIGER grant program  
8 funds and are implementing new zoning in the areas  
9 of two New Bedford station locations that will  
10 promote the development of more than 1,700 new  
11 housing units, as well as 750,000 square feet of new  
12 commercial space.

H-047.04

13           New Bedford and Fall River have long  
14 been an underserved region of the state, and the  
15 proposed Stoughton Electronic Alternative will  
16 support smart growth in urban centers, help protect  
17 green fields from development, and provide faster  
18 service that serves the greatest amount of  
19 passengers.

H-047.05

20           Finally, this project has been fully  
21 studied, is well planned, and under the leadership  
22 of Governor Patrick, has had a thoughtful civic  
23 engagement as a central element to its advancement.

H-047.06

24           We urge that the Final EIS and EIR

1 address only the Stoughton Electric Alternative, as  
2 we begin to focus hopefully on the construction of H-047.06  
3 this line from New Bedford to Taunton as soon as  
4 possible.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, George  
9 Smith, followed by Raymond Medeiros.

10 GEORGE SMITH: Good evening. Welcome to  
11 this great City of New Bedford. My name is George  
12 Smith, currently last eight years, Chairman of the  
13 Planning Board of the City of New Bedford. Prior to  
14 that, I was City Council for eight years, and a  
15 citizen of this terrific city.

16 My comments would be probably before any  
17 of the lights come on, but I just want to thank you  
18 again for being here. This is a really, really  
19 important issue for this City of New Bedford.

20 First of all, I'd like to put my support  
21 behind -- strongly support the Stoughton Electric  
22 Alternative. A 70-minute trip is critical to ensure H-048.01  
23 ridership and the success of a commuter rail service  
24 to the South Coast.



1           The South Coast is not just about  
2 getting to jobs in Boston. It's about connectivity  
3 and opening the South Coast region for everyone to  
4 enjoy.

H-048.02

5           We have a terrific university, the  
6 University of Massachusetts here. We have Bristol  
7 Community College. We probably have some of the  
8 best beaches besides Cape Cod in the area. There's  
9 so many things in New Bedford that people can't get  
10 to because we do not have the rail.

11           I don't want to give you my age. I'm  
12 67 years old. I'm probably not the oldest guy in  
13 the building, but I can remember going down to the  
14 old train depot we had in New Bedford many years ago  
15 and seeing the train there. So it goes back some  
16 time. But the train did come through New Bedford,  
17 and we're looking forward to it coming again.

H-048.03

18           As we mentioned, and it's been mentioned  
19 by several people, the master plan, 47 years this  
20 city was without a master plan. It was adopted by  
21 the planning board in November of 2010.

H-048.04

22           So we do have a master plan, and in that  
23 master plan, rail was discussed; and the next step  
24 of the master plan, the planning office will

1 undertake a complete revision of the city's zoning  
2 code, including the recommendation to establish a  
3 transit-oriented development at Whale's Tooth and  
4 King's Highway, New Bedford's two local station  
5 locations, a recommendation from the South Coast  
6 Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan that  
7 will protect and preserve our priority preservation  
8 areas while enhancing our priority development  
9 areas.

10 Again, I want to thank you very much for  
11 coming to this great City of New Bedford, and I  
12 appreciate anything you can do ahead of time to get  
13 this passed.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Raymond  
18 Medeiros who will be followed by Roy Tridib.

19 Raymond Medeiros.

20 Thank you, sir.

21 Sir, you will be followed by Roy Tridib.

22 RAYMOND MEDEIROS: Good evening. My  
23 name is Ray Medeiros. I've been a citizen of New  
24 Bedford all my life.

1           And I think the only route is a  
2       Stoughton Route through the Hockomock Swamp. That's  
3       the only route. The Attleboro route, forget it, and H-049.01  
4       the buses, they shouldn't be considered. Nobody  
5       wants to go to Boston in a bus.

6           Another thing I'd like to say is that  
7       these people that use the environmental excuses in  
8       the Hockomock Swamp, no matter what they do there, H-049.02  
9       Mother Nature has its way of protecting it and  
10      bringing everything back the way it was.

11          And as far as animals go, soon as you  
12      make noise in there with big equipment, these H-049.03  
13      animals, they're gone.

14          Now, there was a woman she wrote in  
15      tonight's paper she mentioned the trains are going  
16      to affect the wells. How's that going to be? H-049.04  
17      Everybody's well's near the railroad tracks? And  
18      she also complained, of course, of the environmental  
19      problems in the swamp.

20          These people from Easton, they're just  
21      against this thing coming to New Bedford. They're  
22      all using excuses, and I don't think we should put  
23      up with it.

24          I just hope that this is successful. I

1 don't think I'll live to see it. I'm too old, but  
2 my grandchildren will. So that's why I come in here  
3 to give my pieces of mind because I don't think I'll  
4 see it. I'm too old.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
9 Roy Tridib, who will be followed by Ronald  
10 R-E-H-E-A-U-M-E, Rheaume.

11 RONALD RHEAUME: Rheaume.

12 TRIDIB ROY: Thank you. I am T.K. Roy  
13 Tridib or Tridib is my first name. I am a retired  
14 faculty of U. Mass. Dartmouth, and I am speaking on  
15 my behalf, but I know in my heart, I represent the  
16 sentiments of thousands of residents through the  
17 faculty, the families, students, and the parents,  
18 and other community members of this area.

19 As I -- I sincerely thank both the  
20 committees for having these public hearings on the  
21 South Coast Rail Project to collect information  
22 regarding the impact of the project on the  
23 environment and the economy and other implications.

24 As a resident of this area for more than

H-050.01



1 three decades, I honestly and strongly believe that  
2 the South Coast Rail is not only a need but a  
3 necessity for this region to grow and continue with  
4 its full potential to the States of Massachusetts,  
5 Rhode Island, and the nation as a whole.

H-050.01

6 Why I believe so. Well, I have a few  
7 points that I have written down, and I have to watch  
8 the light there, but it is off right now, but  
9 I -- just remind me when my time is over. If I  
10 have -- if I need extra time, I'll give it to the  
11 other committee.

12 Number one, it will provide an  
13 environment friendly and economic transportation  
14 system between this region and Boston, Route 128  
15 belt and beyond. It will reduce pollution from the  
16 thousands of commuting vehicles now burning fossil  
17 fuel. That means less carbon emissions and less  
18 footprint.

H-050.02

19 Number two, it will also reduce the  
20 dependence of imported oil, which is a scarcity  
21 these days, and it will save millions of gallons of  
22 gasoline each year that is used currently by the  
23 commuters in cars and buses.

H-050.03

24 Number three, South Coast has a large

H-050.04

1 population of skilled workers such as trained  
2 plumbers, carpenters, welders, electricians, masonry  
3 workers, painters, landscapers, house estimating  
4 experts, electronic and computer technology trained  
5 technicians, graduating from the local vocational  
6 schools and community colleges of this area.

H-050.04

7 There's a valuable human resource. The workforce  
8 will be available to work in Boston and Route 128  
9 belt area, where there is a dire need of these  
10 services of such a hard-working and skilled  
11 workforce.

12 These workers will have a better earning  
13 from such employment, and spending their money in  
14 this area will inject more economic power to the  
15 community of this area, and it will improve the  
16 quality of life.

17 This is a win-win situation for both  
18 Boston and the Route 128 belt as well as the  
19 community of this city.

20 Number four, it will bring tourists from  
21 different areas. South Coast is endowed with  
22 beautiful sight-seeing attractions, with its nice  
23 clean city beaches, rivers, and creeks, ponds, and  
24 parks, strewn over --

H-050.05

1 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank  
2 you. I would like to invite you to go see our  
3 stenographer in the hallway --

4 TRIDIB ROY: Sure.

5 MR. ROSENBERG: -- so you may finish  
6 your statement.

7 TRIDIB ROY: Thank you.

8 MR. ROSENBERG: And I'm pleased if you  
9 have a written statement, please send it on before  
10 May 27th.

11 Thank you.

12 TRIDIB ROY: Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker will be  
15 Ronald Rheaume. Please pronounce your name for me  
16 and set me straight, sir, and you will be  
17 followed --

18 RONALD RHEAUME: I will set you  
19 straight. Ronald Rheaume.

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Rheaume. Thank you,  
21 sir.

22 And you will be followed by Peter Hanes.

23 RONALD RHEAUME: Okay. Thank you for  
24 this opportunity. My name is Ron Rheaume. I'm a

1 representative with the New England Regional Council  
2 of Carpenters. I'm also a person who is a  
3 representative of the Southeastern Mass. Building  
4 Trades here.

H-051.01

5 I don't know if you know, but there are  
6 thousands of people every day who drive to Boston.  
7 I personally drove to Boston for two years straight  
8 every single day, leaving my home at 4:30, 5:00 in  
9 the morning, to get to work at 7:00 in Boston, and  
10 facing a two-hour ride home at night when I left  
11 Boston at 3:30 in the afternoon.

H-051.02

12 During that time, in those two years,  
13 talk about stress, driving with people doing  
14 80 miles an hour, drinking coffee, putting on  
15 makeup, and talking on the phone is not something  
16 that is very conducive to a smooth day. The ride  
17 home was equally as stressful, hours and hours, or  
18 if there was an accident on the road or if it was  
19 raining or snowing it was just terrible.

20 I literally quit my job after two years  
21 of that, after seeing a number of deaths on the  
22 highway, I just could not deal with that.

23 So this is personally to me it's a  
24 quality of life issue for the people of the South

H-051.03



1 Coast. Being able to sit on a train, read the  
2 paper, drink a coffee, for the ladies put their  
3 makeup on, talk on the phone, all much safer than  
4 doing it driving 80 miles an hour, up Route 24.

H-051.03

5 We talked about the environmental  
6 impact. I want to talk about the economic impact as  
7 well. The South Coast here is poised for great  
8 growth. There's a 300-acre bio park opening up in  
9 Fall River. First construction should probably  
10 start in the fall, and there are a number of  
11 projects that, you know, are lined up for the future  
12 for the South Coast.

H-051.04

13 I just think it's totally important and  
14 extremely important that we receive the economic  
15 justice and the respect that we should have to be  
16 able to go anywhere like anyone else in the state on  
17 a train, an electric train, through Stoughton.

H-051.05

18 Thank you.

19 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Peter  
22 Hanes, who will be followed by Brian Gomes.

23 PETER HAWES: Peter Hawes, New Bedford.

24 Yes, I'd like to support the electric

H-052.01

1 rail through the Stoughton Route, and I don't see  
2 really any reason for any more delay. I think if  
3 we're -- we can save 300,000 car miles a day, that  
4 we need to think seriously about that and get this  
5 approved as soon as possible.

H-052.01

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker, Brian  
9 Gomes who will be followed by Michael Jolliffe.

10 BRIAN GOMES: Thank you very much. I'm  
11 Brian Gomes, and I'm a Councillor-at-Large here in  
12 the City of New Bedford. It's my home. It's been  
13 my home all my life.

14 New Bedford deserves to have the rail  
15 here. The people of this city have waited so long.  
16 We've been deprived of things that other communities  
17 have that have such a rail system. The City of New  
18 Bedford can be a showcase to those that live in  
19 Boston and outside as they come to the Commonwealth  
20 of Massachusetts.

H-053.01

21 For too long has the rail been talked  
22 about and not achieved. You have that opportunity.  
23 We are asking you. It is so important to our  
24 recovery. As we progress in this economic situation

1 that has hit the whole country, we look to recover.  
2 It's part of our plan.

3 I know the administration has worked  
4 very hard under the direction of Mayor Lang, and  
5 there's been others before that. There was dates  
6 that have been set. The dates should be set now to  
7 bring the train to the City of New Bedford. The  
8 City of New Bedford deserves it.

9 And while I have the opportunity I stand  
10 here, Kristina Egan, if you're here, the City  
11 Council would like to thank you or whoever is  
12 responsible for the wall that we talked about when  
13 you came to City Council along Purchase Street that  
14 now will have the look of a rail the way it's  
15 supposed to be and whoever was responsible for that,  
16 thank you very much and those of your party.

17 Again, the City of New Bedford deserves  
18 that rail. We would hope that you would move and do  
19 the things that have to be done in order to bring it  
20 here because, you know, there's some frogs that may  
21 be relocated or some animals or whatever, but,  
22 again, as the gentleman said that spoke, the elderly  
23 gentleman just a moment ago so many people back, he  
24 said that he would like to ride that rail, but he's

1 not sure that it will be here, but he wants it for  
2 his grandchildren. We want it for him. He deserves  
3 that, to ride on that rail. He's waited a long  
4 time. The City of New Bedford has.

H-053.03

5 Thank you very much for the opportunity.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Next  
8 speaker Michael Jolliffe, who will be followed by  
9 Richard Connor.

10 MICHAEL JOLLIFFE: My name is Michael  
11 Jolliffe. I actually am a civil -- trained as a  
12 civil engineer, and I want to raise some issues  
13 which have come up.

14 And, first of all, I'm certainly in  
15 favor of the Stoughton Electric Line. There's no  
16 question an electric train, as is demonstrated in  
17 your presentation, is -- accelerates and decelerates  
18 much faster than a diesel train, and if you look at  
19 the timing between Boston and various locations, in  
20 fact, it is considerably longer to go on the diesel  
21 train than the electric train.

H-054.01

22 On top of that, really speed is an  
23 important issue as I hear it from my friends who  
24 travel to Boston every day. If you go up in the

H-054.02



1 morning during rush hour, it's going to take you  
2 anywhere from an hour and 30 minutes to even two  
3 hours. My wife, in fact, took two hours getting up  
4 there at -- leaving at eight o'clock in the morning.  
5 So it is a problem. So speed is an issue.

H-054.02

6 So one of the big issues is the number  
7 of stops you have. A friend of mine in France tells  
8 me it takes seven minutes for a stop on the TGV.  
9 Here I would think every stop is worth five minutes,  
10 which means if you stop ten times between New  
11 Bedford and Boston, that's 50 minutes, which is a  
12 lot of time.

13 So I think there are approaches where,  
14 in fact, you do have faster trains and then shuttles  
15 between the stations to the transfer stations, which  
16 are at high speed that you have an opportunity for  
17 everyone to get to Boston in less than 50 minutes,  
18 somewhere between 60 and 50 minutes if you follow  
19 the speeds and so on that are recorded in your  
20 document, the EIR.

H-054.03

21 On top of that, as you look at  
22 the -- between the diesel and the electric, the  
23 number of passengers that would take the electric  
24 are more than the diesel, and that's a very

H-054.04

1 important factor. So you will get more passengers  
2 which, in fact, will be a more economical approach  
3 to creating this connection between Boston and New  
4 Bedford, so. So that, from an economic point of  
5 view, because of the number of those passengers you  
6 attract, you'll be much better off.

H-054.04

7 One of the issues I think that is  
8 important in your -- in the environmental issue is  
9 only having one track in certain portions of this  
10 rail connection. You need two tracks, and you're  
11 talking really about 14 feet of dimension, as I read  
12 it, on your report.

H-054.05

13 So it seems to me that that 14 feet of  
14 the pond or whatever it is is a very, very small  
15 proportion of the amount of wetlands that we have.

16 And, in fact, if you look at --

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir. Thank  
18 you very much.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
21 Richard Connor who will be followed by James Mathes.

22 RICHARD CONNOR: I'm Richard Connor. I  
23 live in New Bedford, and I'm just speaking for  
24 myself.

1 I want to commend Mass. DOT for their  
2 careful analysis and conclusion that the Stoughton  
3 Rail -- the Stoughton Rail is the way to go. I'm  
4 convinced, and it has to be electric. That's a  
5 no-brainer. That shouldn't even be open to debate.

H-055.01

6 And it will be used. I often want to go  
7 up to Boston for this or that event, and then I sit  
8 there and I think about that drive and the traffic  
9 and the parking, and I don't go, you know, because,  
10 you know, is the event worth all the stress of going  
11 up there the three hours at least, going and coming?  
12 And if there's a comfortable train that's reasonably  
13 fast, I'm on it. I'm on board, and I think a lot of  
14 other people will be on board. So we will get the  
15 riders, and I hope you expedite this, and we get it  
16 soon.

H-055.02

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

20 The next speaker is James Mathes who  
21 will be followed by Joseph Lopes.

22 JAMES MATHES: Hi, my name is Jim  
23 Mathes, 303 Brownell Avenue in New Bedford.

24 I'm here tonight to offer my support for

H-056.01

1 the extension of commuter rail service to New  
2 Bedford and Fall River, specifically for the South  
3 Coast Rail Project.

4 Additionally, when you reach the  
5 appropriate point in this process, I urge you to  
6 select the so-called Stoughton Route because it will  
7 provide the fastest commuter trip time and the most  
8 environmentally -- and it's the most environmentally  
9 sound alternative.

10 Further, I hope you will endorse the use  
11 of electric trains as opposed to diesel-powered  
12 engines so as to maximize the potential of our new  
13 rail service.

14 Among my reasons for publicly commenting  
15 on this project is because I'm a member of a  
16 community that is doing everything it can to pick  
17 itself up by its boot straps and improve our lot in  
18 life, not only for ourselves, but also for future  
19 generations. We are doing everything we can with  
20 the resources available to us to make our part of  
21 Massachusetts a better place to live, work, and  
22 raise a family.

23 For too long now the South Coast region  
24 of Massachusetts has been without the vital



1 transportation services afforded by commuter rail  
2 service. This lack of service has adversely  
3 impacted our region's economy and quality of life.

H-056.02

4 Ironically, the primary opponents of  
5 South Coast commuter rail are people living north of  
6 us who already have commuter rail service available  
7 to them. For decades now they've mounted efforts to  
8 deny our region from having a primary transportation  
9 system they have been using and enjoying for years.

H-056.03

10 We've listened to their complaints about  
11 not wanting South Coast commuter rail trains passing  
12 through their towns, yet scores of residents from  
13 those very towns who seek to block our efforts climb  
14 aboard commuter rail trains every day, trains that  
15 pass through other communities on their trips to and  
16 from Boston.

17 To be blunt, it's annoying to be on the  
18 receiving end of their rather unsophisticated do as  
19 I say and not as I do message. Personally, I don't  
20 care what they say, but I'm determined to be able to  
21 do the same things they're able to do. Nothing  
22 more; nothing less.

23 Transportation systems are primary  
24 assets that support a community's economy. The

H-056.04

1 Cities of New Bedford and Fall River suffer some of  
2 the highest unemployment rates in Massachusetts.  
3 There are literally tens of thousands of people who  
4 are out of work in our region. These are good,  
5 hard-working people who want and deserve the same  
6 opportunities to access jobs that are currently  
7 available to our northern neighbors presently  
8 enjoying the benefit of commuter rail service.

9 It's been a long time since residents  
10 have had an opportunity to become involved in an  
11 effort to bring commuter rail to our region. That's  
12 why there's so many of us here tonight. By every  
13 measure commuter rail will be the same powerful  
14 economic tool for us as it is in every other Eastern  
15 Massachusetts city and town that already has it. We  
16 want it too. We need it, and we deserve it.

17 Thank you for visiting our community,  
18 for requesting our input, and for listening to what  
19 we have to say.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker, Joseph  
24 Lopes, who will be followed by Randall Kunz.

1 JOSEPH LOPES: First of all, I want to  
2 thank you for coming down here, Army Corps of  
3 Engineers, and, Kristina Egan, for all that you've  
4 done. You've really championed Governor Deval's  
5 promise to bring commuter rail to the South Coast.

6 As a life-long resident and member of  
7 the New Bedford City Council, if you live in New  
8 Bedford for a great time, you're dealing with the  
9 largest inequality, and that is the ability to take  
10 a train to Boston. As James Mathes said and other  
11 people have said, if you live in communities that  
12 have it, you don't care about the have-nots. Well,  
13 we're the have-nots, and this is for our voice to be  
14 heard. So please bring commuter rail to the area.

H-057.01

15 Thank you.

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Randall  
19 Kunz, who will be followed by Melinda Ailes.

20 RANDALL KUNZ: Good evening. I'm  
21 Randall Kunz. I chair the Southeastern Regional  
22 Planning District. That's 27 towns from North  
23 Attleboro down through Wareham.

24 The Commission unanimously approved a

H-058.01

1 letter, which will be forwarded to you, brief  
2 extracts of which are SREPPD, which is the  
3 Southeastern Regional Planning District. SREPPD has  
4 been deeply involved in this project for a long,  
5 long time.

6 SREPPD supports the Stoughton Route,  
7 highly recommends electric, recommends against the  
8 Whittenton Alternative, and commends speedy completion  
9 of the analysis.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker Melinda  
14 Ailes, who will be followed by Jeffrey Pontiff.

15 MELINDA AILES: Hi. I'm Melinda Ailes.  
16 I'm from Mattapoisett and just speaking as a  
17 citizen.

18 Thank you very much for being here  
19 tonight and listening and thank you to Kristina for  
20 all you've done over the many, many years.

21 I've heard that there have been requests  
22 for an extension for the review period. I would  
23 respectfully ask that you deny that request. We've  
24 been waiting a very, very long time, and the



1 information has been available public and  
2 transparent for well over a year.

H-059.01

3 I'd like to voice my support for the  
4 South Coast Rail Project and the Stoughton Electric  
5 Alternative.

H-059.02

6 As your report shows, the Stoughton  
7 Alternative is clearly the Least Environmentally  
8 Damaging Practicable Alternative for a project that  
9 is critical for the economic development throughout  
10 the entire region.

11 We need the rail as a key component of  
12 smart growth and economic development, and to  
13 rectify the decades of economic injustice that has  
14 been obvious in this region.

H-059.03

15 Thank you.

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker,  
19 Jeffrey Pontiff, who will be followed by Kreg  
20 Espinola.

21 JEFFREY PONTIFF: Jeff Pontiff, Brownell  
22 Avenue, New Bedford. Good evening.

23 I grew up in Fall River. I lived in  
24 Plymouth for 25 years. Prior to the commuter rail

1 coming into Plymouth, I listened to the NIMBY  
2 rhetoric for years, and then I was able to enjoy the  
3 quality of life that came when that line came into  
4 Kingston. I also was one of those commuters that  
5 went back and forth every day on Route 3 by myself.

6 Thirteen years ago, I moved to New  
7 Bedford. I'm a commercial real estate broker. I've  
8 watched over a hundred million dollars been invested  
9 in just our downtown over the last 13 years. I've  
10 watched our store front vacancy rates go from  
11 70 percent of vacancy to 90 percent of occupancy.

12 I've watched this city go from, for me  
13 personally, it was why would you ever move to New  
14 Bedford to becoming one of the coolest -- and I can  
15 use that, Jim, because I've got gray hair -- coolest  
16 cities on the South Coast, and certainly in  
17 Southeastern Massachusetts.

18 My point is this: I brokered probably a  
19 good portion of the transactions that have occurred  
20 in this city revolving -- involving those  
21 developments, and I don't say that as bragging but  
22 maybe just to give some credence to my comments.

23 I firmly believe -- and this is the  
24 point I want to make -- that we will not sustain the

H-060.01

1 growth that we have had over the last 10, 13 years  
2 unless we get a more affluent populous here, and the  
3 only way -- and it's been proven by the other  
4 gateway cities, as has previously been mentioned  
5 tonight -- the way to do that is through commuter  
6 rail; so, for me, it's plain and simple. For us to  
7 continue on our success, we need that commuter rail.

8 So thank you.

9 Colonel, I might add seeing the castles  
10 there, you're very welcome in New Bedford. I don't  
11 normally mention this, but I'd like to take the  
12 opportunity to say that I privately served the Corps  
13 as a platoon leader and a company commander with the  
14 39th Combat Engineers in Vietnam.

15 So thank you.

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker is  
19 Kreg Espinola, which will be followed by Candace  
20 Heel -- Heald.

21 KREG ESPINOLA: Hi. I'm Kreg Espinola.  
22 I'm a resident of the City of New Bedford. I think  
23 that's kind of a tough act to follow there, but I'll  
24 do my best.

1 I'd just like to start out by thanking  
2 you all for coming today. It's incredibly important  
3 As you can hear from the testimony, this project is  
4 incredibly important to the South Coast. I think  
5 it's equally important to the rest of the state so  
6 that they can be connected to us, as important it is  
7 for us to be connected to them.

H-061.01

8 I'd like to mention about approximately  
9 ten years ago, I think, I testified in Taunton at a  
10 hearing for South Coast commuter rail. The issue  
11 has been vetted. You know, I think Senator Montigny  
12 had indicated it was 20 years ago that the issue had  
13 come up. We vetted the issue over and over and over  
14 again, and I think that the support is clear from  
15 the testimony that you've heard today.

H-061.02

16 At the time, ten years ago I was  
17 commuting to law school. It would have been great  
18 to have commuter rail then. I was going to law  
19 school in Boston. I don't think that I'd like to be  
20 here ten years from now with no rail or 20 years  
21 from now with kids that don't have the ability to  
22 take rail to Boston. So we'd prefer the Stoughton  
23 Alternative.

H-061.03

24 Thank you for coming down to New Bedford.



1 We appreciate it.

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Candace  
5 Heald followed by Bruce Duarte.

6 CANDACE HEALD: Good evening. Good  
7 evening.

8 I read the executive summary of the  
9 disseminated report from February 2011 with great  
10 interest. For my reading the electric train to the  
11 Stoughton pathway seems the clear alternative both  
12 for the economic impact, the population served, with  
13 the least disruption to domestic and business  
14 pursuits.

15 I live in Mattapoisett. There's this  
16 wonderful story about Oliver Wendell Holmes who was  
17 a great jurist and a summer resident of  
18 Mattapoisett. It's said that he took the train at  
19 nine o'clock and ended up in his Cambridge office by  
20 eleven, did his business, had lunch, and started  
21 back at three, and arrived back at five. There was  
22 this wonderful train called the Dude Special that  
23 served this area, and that would be virtually  
24 impossible to do now. There's not the technology.

H-062.01

H-062.02

1 There's not the time, and even if you use your car,  
2 it would be virtually impossible to do that.

3 And the point is that the linkages  
4 between residents, commerce, and cities of all size  
5 has really been fractured; and so in this time of  
6 great economic and environmental concern, I would  
7 really urge the pathway, the Stoughton pathway and  
8 the electric rail to kind of reconnect this area of  
9 the South Coast with areas of commerce in cities  
10 that were in the 19th century. We're not really  
11 moving forward unless we do this. We've regressed  
12 entirely.

13 Thank you very much.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you very much.

16 Bruce -- I know I mispronounced your name, sir. I'm  
17 sorry.

18 BRUCE DUARTE: You did a little bit.

19 MR. ROSENBERG: You will be followed by  
20 Stephen Smith.

21 BRUCE DUARTE: The name is actually  
22 Bruce Duarte, Jr. I'm a New Bedford City  
23 Councillor. I represent -- proudly represent the  
24 good folks from Ward 4.

1           And I just wanted to say that I support  
2 obviously this rail for everything that's been  
3 stated, including the economic impact, including  
4 jobs, including environmental justice, but for me,  
5 more than that. I support it because not only do I  
6 believe that this rail will connect the South Coast  
7 to Boston, but also I believe that it will connect  
8 Boston to the South Coast.

9           I believe that we have so much to offer  
10 down here, with everything from festivals, to our  
11 working waterfront, to the -- to me, the most  
12 beautiful city in the South Coast. That's what I  
13 believe, we and this project can do is connect the  
14 state where it has not been connected before.

15           Thank you.

16           MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

17           (Applause.)

18           MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker,  
19 Stephen Smith who will be followed by Joshua  
20 Freeman.

21           STEPHEN SMITH: My name is Steve Smith,  
22 and I'm Executive Director of Southeastern Regional  
23 Planning District. Randall Kunz made the official  
24 statement of our agency earlier, but I wanted to add

H-063.01

1 some personal observations.

2 Senator Montigny talked about studies  
3 that have been done on this project looking at  
4 various alternatives, going back to the early 1990s,  
5 and I read all those studies. I've been involved  
6 with all those studies, and they all at that time  
7 raised hopes which turned out to be false in terms  
8 of this project coming soon.

9 They had -- they studied different  
10 alternatives, but there was one constant among all  
11 of them, and that was they pointed out the  
12 long-standing inequity, as Kristina referred to, if  
13 this region was not served by commuter rail.

14 When Governor Patrick came in 2007, four  
15 years ago, and announced that he was restarting the  
16 process and -- and inviting the Corps of Engineers  
17 to be involved, there was a collective groan in this  
18 region that here we go again. We've been down this  
19 route before. He did relieve our anxiety a little  
20 bit by naming Kristina Egan as project manager; but  
21 it's been four years now, you have released your  
22 study, and I will say the wait has been well worth  
23 it. The study is thorough. It may tell us what we  
24 thought we knew, but you have left no stone unturned

H-064.01



1 and really looked at the alternatives very well.

2 A couple of points: One is you make it  
3 very clear that from an operational standpoint, the  
4 Stoughton Alternative is really the only one that is  
5 feasible. The Attleboro, Middleborough, Rapid Bus  
6 Alternatives simply do not work; and, secondly,  
7 you've told us that the Stoughton Route has the  
8 lowest environmental impact. We've been hearing a  
9 lot to the contrary to that from our neighbors up in  
10 the north, but, frankly, we should have known that  
11 because as we would remind you, the trains ran that  
12 route as recently as 1958.

13 So I want to applaud the work you've  
14 done so far, but I want to make three points going  
15 forward. First of all, in selecting your LEDPA,  
16 please give great consideration to travel time and  
17 an alternative that has the lowest travel time.

H-064.02

18 We don't, as Mayor Lang referred to,  
19 want another iron horse, and there's a strong  
20 correlation between travel time and ridership.

21 Secondly, you would think from what  
22 we've heard the last couple of decades that the only  
23 environmental issue associated with this project is  
24 the Hockomock Swamp. Don't forget -- and -- and the

H-064.08

1 important other impacts: the greenhouse gas  
2 emissions, the smart -- the important smart growth  
3 benefits, and the urban revitalization benefits that  
4 you've heard about this evening.

H-064.08

5 And, finally, don't delay any longer.  
6 We've waited a long time. Please move forward as  
7 quickly as possible.

H-064.09

8 Thank you.

9 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker is  
12 Joshua Freeman who will be followed by Anne Louro.

13 JOSHUA FREEMAN: That's fine. Hi. I'm  
14 Joshua Freeman. I'm from Raynham, born in Taunton,  
15 and I'm speaking for myself.

16 I'd like to see a -- well, I applaud  
17 Kristina. I'm glad you helped get the Army in here.  
18 The Army gets things done.

19 And I'd like to see the US Congress show  
20 a financial support of this. I want to see the  
21 money here so it can get done.

H-065.01

22 I've been trying to start a new business  
23 for a long time. I'm having an extremely difficult  
24 time. I'd like to see financial support from

H-065.02

1 Congress for people like me to get stuff done.

2 I support the Stoughton Route. You  
3 should get to New Bedford as quick as possible. The  
4 electric train -- Mayor Lang was talking about the  
5 Tokyo. They have a fast train there. I know when I  
6 was -- after college I went to -- graduated U. Mass.  
7 Dartmouth. I went to Spain, and when I was in  
8 Madrid, I wanted to go to Seville. I took a train,  
9 and it was -- I'm not sure if it was electric or  
10 what it was, but all I know is I got there fast. It  
11 was far superior to the train system here. I don't  
12 see any reason why you can't build an advanced train  
13 system like some parts of the world have.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Anne  
18 Louro who will be followed by Roger Stanford.

19 ANNE LOURO: Good evening. My name is  
20 Ann Louro. I'm the Preservation Planner for the  
21 City of New Bedford. I'm also a New Bedford native  
22 and lifetime resident.

23 New Bedford strongly supports the  
24 Stoughton Electric Alternative. Its 70-minute trip

1 is critical to ensure ridership and the success of  
2 commuter rail service to the South Coast.

H-066.01

3 New Bedford also prefers the electric  
4 alternative because it is the most flexible fuel  
5 source as it can be converted from solar, wind, and  
6 other potential energy sources in the future.

H-066.02

7 South Coast Rail is an issue of equity.  
8 New Bedford and Fall River are the only cities of  
9 their size and population that do not have commuter  
10 rail access; yet, we continue to pay taxes, thus  
11 supporting public transit for all other regions of  
12 the Commonwealth.

H-066.03

13 South Coast Rail is not about just  
14 getting to Boston. It's also for folks to get here  
15 as well. New Bedford has many great historical,  
16 cultural, and architectural assets, including but  
17 not least the New Bedford Whaling National  
18 Historical Park, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the  
19 Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, which is the largest  
20 Portuguese feast in the world, and the Buttonwood  
21 Park Zoo, one of America's finest small zoos,  
22 according to the American Zoological Association.

H-066.04

23 If you go to any thriving community with  
24 a strong sense of community in place, you will note



1 that public transportation is critical as it ensures  
2 access for everyone to our special places.

H-066.04

3 This year, New Bedford was named a Dozer  
4 Distinctive Destination by the National Trust for  
5 Historic Preservation, and South Coast Rail is the  
6 key to providing public transportation to these  
7 significant historical and cultural resources.

8 In November of 2010, the New Bedford  
9 Planning Board adopted the first city master plan  
10 since 1964. It's called New Bedford 2020. With an  
11 eye on the future, yet valuing our past, this  
12 document strongly supports the South Coast Rail  
13 Project and both the economic and transportation  
14 sections.

H-066.05

15 Over 1,100 people participated in the  
16 civic engagement process for this plan, across all  
17 ages, races, and ethnicities, continually showing  
18 support for commuter rail service to our region.

19 Lastly, I want to stress that this  
20 project is about equity, regional connectivity, and  
21 access for residents and visitors to experience our  
22 unique, authentic, and distinctive region, not just  
23 getting to Boston.

H-066.06

24 We firmly support the Stoughton

H-066.07

1       Alternative and urge the Army Corps not to extend  
2       the comment period, as the technical documents that  
3       are the core of the DEIS and DEIR were completed and  
4       posted online in the fall of 2009.

H-066.07

5               Further delays continue to limit the  
6       project's asset -- excuse me -- access to federal  
7       transportation funding since South Coast Rail has to  
8       be permitted in order to be eligible to apply for  
9       such funding.

H-066.08

10              I thank you for this opportunity this  
11       evening.

12              MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

13              (Applause.)

14              MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Roger  
15       Stanford will be followed by Irene Schall.

16              ROGER STANFORD: Good evening. My name  
17       is Roger Stanford. I live here in New Bedford and  
18       with my wife and law partner, Irene Schall, I  
19       practice law here in New Bedford.

20              I want to relate a personal experience.  
21       A couple months ago Irene and I went to Philadelphia  
22       for a long weekend. We arrived at the  
23       Philadelphia --

24              AUDIENCE MEMBER: Into the mike, please.

1                   ROGER STANFORD: We arrived at the  
2 Philadelphia Airport, and we proceeded from the  
3 terminal to the baggage claim. We picked up our  
4 bags and between the terminal and the baggage claim,  
5 Philadelphia had commuter rail service that serviced  
6 every one of the terminals. We boarded the train,  
7 which took us in a fast and efficient manner into  
8 Philadelphia. We exited at a train station that was  
9 about a block from our hotel.

10                   The purpose of what I'm saying is  
11 twofold. Number one, this is not just an issue of  
12 the South Coast cities and towns. It's also an  
13 issue for the Boston metropolitan area. In order  
14 for a city like Boston to thrive and grow, there  
15 must be a way of getting people into and out of that  
16 city.

17                   Next, it's also not just an economic  
18 issue, it is a quality of life issue. The  
19 availability of the cultural, sporting, entertainment,  
20 and educational opportunities need to be available  
21 to people that can get there quickly, and that's the  
22 Stoughton Rail Alternative.

23                   The environmental alternative to  
24 building the Stoughton Rail Alternative line is to

H-067.01

H-067.02

H-067.03

1 dump more and more cars onto Route 24, with a  
2 negative environmental impact of requiring more and  
3 more parking facilities in Boston, expanding the  
4 number of lanes on Route 24, burning more and more  
5 expensive gasoline, and polluting the air with that  
6 gasoline.

H-067.04

7 Thank you.

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Irene  
11 Schall, who will be followed by David Dennis.

12 IRENE SCHALL: Thank you. My name is  
13 Irene Schall. I'm a resident of New Bedford.

14 Thanks everyone for being here and  
15 allowing us all to participate so constructively and  
16 actively in tonight's hearing.

H-068.01

17 I'd like to echo the support for the  
18 Stoughton line, for that route as well as for the  
19 electric train.

20 And I'd like to simply put a face on  
21 some of the comments that I think we all have shared  
22 and the concerns we have about the economics and the  
23 equality issues.

24 I've recently had the opportunity to

H-068.02



1 travel to both Fitchburg and Lawrence and see in  
2 both of those communities their lovely commuter rail  
3 stations. Of course, we don't have one.

4 I have also had the opportunity to speak  
5 to public officials in the City of Quincy; and for  
6 those of you who may not know, the City of Quincy  
7 was right behind us in this last census count, and I  
8 joke that they were nipping at our heels, so to  
9 speak, and the officials said to me, well, it's all  
10 about rail, and it's all about the Red line. It's  
11 all about connectivity to Boston, and that's what we  
12 want, and that's what we deserve.

13 On a personal note, I can say I have a  
14 son who has traveled to and from Boston for three  
15 years. He works actually just a little bit south of  
16 Boston, in Quincy. Unfortunately for me, as his  
17 mother, he is going to be moving to that area  
18 because the commute is horrendous.

19 I, like most other parents, would love  
20 to have my children settle close to me. New Bedford  
21 is a wonderful place. He has commuted this way for  
22 three years, and this was not his choice. It simply  
23 is a reality of life. His work draws him to Boston.  
24 He would love to be here. The rail would help him

1 do that and would help other people make the same  
2 choices. Perhaps they'd like to work in Boston and  
3 live in New Bedford or alternatively perhaps we can  
4 attract more people to move to New Bedford who  
5 haven't yet realized the tremendous advantages that  
6 our area brings.

7 Thank you very much.

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, David  
11 Dennis who will be followed by Jon Mitchell.

12 DAVID DENNIS: Hi. My name is David  
13 Dennis, and I'm a local attorney in the other great  
14 city just down the road here, Fall River.

15 I want to just to lend my voice to the H-069.01  
16 support here of many others that you've already  
17 heard from tonight by supporting the project and  
18 supporting the Hockomock Route for the electric  
19 train coming down to the South Coast, and I'm not  
20 going to mention all the same reasons, but the  
21 environmental reasons, the economic, and the social  
22 reasons that are so important to this area.

23 Indeed, as many -- again, as many other  
24 people have said, we've all waited a very, very,

1 very long time; and unlike this gentleman here who  
2 was a little bit older than I am -- I'm 56 years  
3 old -- I'm hoping that I get to ride on the train;  
4 but I'm very confident that with the support and the  
5 leadership of our Governor, certainly Kristina Egan,  
6 and her agency has done an absolutely terrific job  
7 moving this project along, that it will be a  
8 reality, and it will be a reality very, very, very  
9 soon.

10 One comment that I would like to make  
11 and a recommendation, in Fall River there's a tour  
12 bus going to be located near Crab Pond, which is  
13 also right near the Ponta Delgada gates on the  
14 Battleship Cove. That's very close to what we call  
15 Crab Pond down there. One consideration may be, at  
16 least environmentally, that maybe that terminal  
17 could be relocated not very far away, in an area  
18 that it is now -- or formerly known as Corrugated  
19 Box Company. That may mitigate some of the  
20 environmental concerns that you may have.

21 Again, I just want to say thank you very  
22 much for coming. We appreciate you being here. We  
23 appreciate your thoroughness and your efforts.

24 Please expedite this project. New Bedford, Fall

H-069.02

H-069.03

1 River, all the surrounding cities and towns need the  
2 project for all the reasons that are stated. We  
3 waited a very, very long time. Sooner in this case  
4 is better.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker, Jon  
9 Mitchell who will be followed by Henry Bousquet.

10 JON MITCHELL: Thank you, and good  
11 evening. My name is Jon Mitchell. I'm a resident  
12 of New Bedford.

13 I'm not going to cover the same economic  
14 environmental and psychic arguments that we've heard  
15 all night. I will note that what is striking about  
16 all of them is that there is near unanimity over a  
17 course of the last two hours. We've heard the same  
18 thing over and over again. We didn't rehearse this  
19 all together. What you're hearing is a real  
20 consensus coming out of Southeastern Massachusetts  
21 in favor of rail generally and the Stoughton  
22 Alternative in particular.

23 Let me address one, I think, narrower  
24 issue and perhaps somewhat whirling issue. As I



1 understand it, your charge this evening is to  
2 evaluate the relative practicality of the  
3 alternatives, and I can speak to that, even though  
4 it's sort of in one narrow way, but I think in an  
5 authoritative way in the sense that I've been for a  
6 long time a commuter from New Bedford to Boston.

7 I'm employed as a federal prosecutor in  
8 Boston, and it's a job -- my job is one that doesn't  
9 exist down here. There isn't a federal courthouse  
10 in New Bedford unfortunately, and so -- and I've  
11 done that commute in any number of ways. I've taken  
12 every possible mode of transportation. I drive for  
13 the most part. I drive admittedly in an unsafe way  
14 because I spend most of my time on a cell phone  
15 because I can't otherwise justify an hour-and-30,  
16 hour-and-45-minute commute each way without at least  
17 getting some work done. I've taken the train out of  
18 Lakeville many times, up to three or four times a  
19 week, and I've done the bus route.

20 I mention all this because those  
21 commutes, invariably the drive during rush hour, the  
22 bus, and the train, when you combine all segments:  
23 travel to the train stop, the train ride itself, and  
24 then the walk to work are all roughly about an hour

H-070.02

1 and 45 minutes, and it isn't sustainable over the  
2 course of a career, and we're talking now one of the  
3 justifications for extending rail down here or  
4 reestablishing rail is to give people career-long  
5 jobs in Boston and to be able to live down here.  
6 And as you look at the alternatives, the only one  
7 that makes any sense at all because there is so  
8 much -- it would be such a shorter commute is  
9 Stoughton. It really is a no-brainer in that sense.

10 Attleboro, the bus route, the Whittenton  
11 route all promise very, very long commutes that  
12 people, speaking from experience, cannot sustain in  
13 the long run; and so in that way when you couple  
14 that fact with the fact that it promises a much  
15 lower environmental impact, and it will be cheaper,  
16 it really is -- the Stoughton Route is a no-brainer.  
17 So I leave you with that.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker is  
22 Henry Bousquet, who will be followed by Thomas  
23 LaPointe.

24 HENRY BOUSQUET: Good evening, ladies

1 and gentlemen. My name is Henry Bousquet. I'm here  
2 to speak on behalf of the people of my neighborhood  
3 essentially.

4 I'm excited to finally get to speak  
5 about the great potential that a South Coast Rail  
6 line brings to our city. New Bedford was once a  
7 mighty economic engine for the State of Massachusetts.  
8 With our historic successes in whaling, textiles,  
9 and fishing, we were the -- once an enormous bread  
10 basket that helped grow our state for decades.

11 New Bedford has suffered the exodus of  
12 over 40,000 plus jobs in the last 50 years. We, the  
13 people of the South Coast and New Bedford, have paid  
14 for billions of dollars in countless other  
15 Massachusetts infrastructure projects.

16 We on the South Coast now ask the people  
17 of our state to, please, consider helping us build  
18 our 80- or 90-minute commute, preferably the  
19 Stoughton Electric Route, commute to Boston, and  
20 connect the histories of Boston to that of our New  
21 Bedford's history for the future and for that future  
22 of our children.

23 Thank you very much.

24 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

H-071.01

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Thomas  
3 LaPointe, who will be followed by Chuck Dade.

4 THOMAS LaPOINTE: Hi. My name is Tom  
5 LaPointe. I'm a life-long resident of Fall River.

6 I commute 24 daily. It's a major  
7 hassle. The City of Fall River's been waiting for  
8 commuter rail for over 20 years.

H-072.01

9 The City's suffered economically because  
10 of the lack of job opportunities there. The  
11 commuter rail would improve that dramatically.

H-072.02

12 I would -- am strongly in favor of the  
13 Stoughton Electric Alternative. I -- excuse  
14 me -- the NIMBYism from some of the northern  
15 communities is getting a little tiring as a delaying  
16 tactic it seems. If they delay, they win, and it's  
17 a little ironic particularly considering both  
18 Stoughton and Easton are noted for beautiful  
19 historic railroad stations; so, I appreciate the  
20 Army Corps of Engineers' input on this.

H-072.03

21 I think the Hockomock Swamp issue is  
22 minor. Particularly with the trestle construction,  
23 I think it would have very minor impacts on wildlife  
24 there, and, again, I strongly -- you know, the City

H-072.04



1 of Fall River needs commuter rail yesterday.

2 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. ROSENBERG: The next speaker, Chuck  
5 Dade who will be followed by Hannah Martin.

6 CHUCK DADE: Hi. Chuck Dade, Hawthorn  
7 Street, New Bedford.

8 I would say New Bedford's ready. I  
9 mean, they've already started to build the bridges  
10 and such. They're waiting for the other end of this  
11 to happen, whether it's from Attleboro or Stoughton,  
12 but you've already decided that Stoughton is the  
13 best economic -- environmental way. The time factor  
14 shows it's the most -- it's the best way, and beyond  
15 that, you know, diesels are antiques. I mean to me  
16 a diesel train would be a look-back. The only way  
17 we can really green power our train is to have the  
18 electric train because we have -- you know, we're  
19 going into a solar now, and if we have electric  
20 trains, we can plug into that.

21 Beyond that, New Bedford's ready for  
22 that too. New Bedford has Cape Wind coming in. It  
23 could probably be up and running by the time the  
24 train's running, and if the state negotiated the

1 right deal, half the Cape Wind Power is still  
2 available; so we could actually power -- power the  
3 train partially at least with Cape Wind.

4 Let me see. To me, if you're going to  
5 go up through Attleboro, you might as well go  
6 through Providence and then you could go to New York  
7 City and everywhere else, but that's another matter.

8 To me, the only reason for an extension  
9 would be if you did come up with Attleboro because  
10 then we'd have to find reasons to change your mind.

11 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you very much.

14 The next speaker, Hannah Martin.

15 Ms. Martin?

16 Ariane Martin?

17 David Oliveira.

18 Mr. Oliveira will be followed by Mark  
19 Hess.

20 DAVID OLIVEIRA: Good evening. My name  
21 is David Oliveira. I'm a resident of the Town of  
22 Dartmouth. I'm also a commuter to Boston.

23 Like the previous speaker mentioned,  
24 I've taken the bus. I've taken the train, and I

1 drive on many occasions. I would say that those are  
2 not viable alternatives when considering the  
3 Stoughton Rail.

H-074.01

4 The commuting time has gotten to be  
5 intolerable. It's not good for families. It  
6 takes -- it can wind up being a 12-hour day or  
7 longer.

8 The Stoughton Route is going to become  
9 an absolute necessity for this region. The incomes,  
10 the wages that one can gain from Boston have  
11 incredible impact on the environmental health of  
12 this region.

H-074.02

13 The awful alternative is to move.  
14 That's what I've seen happen in Washington, D.C. for  
15 those that used to have an hour-and-a-half drive to  
16 two-hour drive; and, yet, those that took the train  
17 from West Virginia were able to sustain it over  
18 lengthy careers.

H-074.03

19 The reinvestment of those wages and of  
20 this project will lead to environmental enhancements  
21 and a better quality of life for this region. And  
22 when I talk about the congestion, that's after we  
23 spent \$14 billion on the Big Dig, not before.

H-074.04

24 The Rapid Bus, I've always been a fan of

1 it. I think it's good for America as a whole. It's  
2 quick, and it's cost effective, but in this case,  
3 I'm disheartened to learn that it's -- it's not  
4 financially feasible. It's not technically  
5 feasible. I don't believe that it's second class  
6 transportation. That's not why I oppose it. It's  
7 just that it just won't work because of the 93  
8 Route 3 split, and the costs involved with that. So  
9 the electric alternative is faster. It offers  
10 greater frequency of service and will be a huge  
11 benefit.

H-074.04

12 In terms of environmental issues and  
13 transportation issues, they often come into  
14 conflict, but we have an obligation to properly  
15 balance the needs of population growth, economic  
16 growth, and environmental protection.

H-074.05

17 We did this with the additional runway  
18 at Logan, and we did it with the Big Dig, and those  
19 had awful environmental impacts, but ultimately we  
20 had an obligation to the future, and those projects  
21 moved forward.

22 Stoughton is a great congestion mitigation  
23 project and has many positive benefits to the entire  
24 Route 93 corridor.



1                   Finally, I'd like to add that 11 years  
2 ago, I asked the then Secretary of Environmental  
3 Affairs about a NEPA study, and he said it was not  
4 necessary; so here we are 11 years later, and,  
5 please, no more delays.

6                   Let's just wrap up the comment period  
7 and move forward. We're going to be entering the  
8 phase for the reauthorization of T Little, which  
9 provides an opportunity to get federal money. We  
10 have to have our ducks in a row to do that.

11                  Thank you.

12                  MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

13                  Next speaker, Mark Hess, who will be  
14 followed by Len Coriaty.

15                  MARK HESS: Thank you. My name is Mark  
16 Hess. I'm a resident of New Bedford. I also work  
17 for an owner and developer of housing. It has about  
18 6,500 units between Charlotte, North Carolina, and  
19 Burlington, Vermont; and my official position is in  
20 support of the Stoughton Electric Route, and I'm  
21 against postponing the comment period.

22                  And in terms of my big picture opinion  
23 on this project, this isn't just a South Coast  
24 project. I mean, I'm down here because I believe in

H-074.06

H-075.01

H-075.02

1 the rail. I believe in what New Bedford has to  
2 offer, but this is also an important project for the  
3 State of Massachusetts. We have all sorts of  
4 development pressures. We have problems with flight  
5 and quality of labor from the high-cost living  
6 areas, such as Boston, and here in New Bedford, in  
7 the South Coast, we have a hard time creating  
8 quality jobs and getting the investment in this  
9 area. So, creating this link creates a more  
10 efficient market between people in Boston who would  
11 love to find -- the fair market rent after utilities  
12 in New Bedford is about -- the HUD fair market rent  
13 for 2011 is about \$750. You know, you're going to  
14 pay at least double that in Boston for equivalent  
15 housing.

16 So there is a lot of opportunity to  
17 offer on an already existing urban infrastructure  
18 without developing new housing very, very expensive  
19 housing to build it in Boston with all sorts of  
20 subsidies to service the growing needs of businesses  
21 and workforce in Boston. Here we have something to  
22 offer.

23 And, meanwhile, in terms of the social  
24 justice front, in New Bedford, you have access to

1 more jobs and a quality workforce with the good work  
2 ethic down here that simply needs a more efficient  
3 connection to job opportunities in the Boston area;  
4 and in terms of quality of life, you know, I spend  
5 many days a week up in Boston myself, and I think  
6 that having an opportunity to give to your family  
7 and to your community is important, and when you  
8 spend three hours in a car on your way home every  
9 day, it's a major sacrifice, and I don't think that  
10 it's -- it should be what we have to experience here  
11 down in New Bedford. I would rather spend that time  
12 with my family and in my community; and that's my  
13 comment.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Len  
18 Coriaty, who will be followed by Michele Paul.

19 LEN CORIATY: Good evening and welcome  
20 to New Bedford.

21 Thank you for making this opportunity  
22 available to us and thank you for all your work in  
23 making the case for why commuter rail to the South  
24 Coast makes so much sense.

1 I stand in support of commuter rail to H-076.01  
2 the South Coast, the Stoughton Alternative, and the  
3 electric train; and I stand before you in three  
4 capacities: a taxpayer, a parent, and the Executive  
5 Director of the Greater New Bedford Workforce and  
6 Investment Board.

7 A life-long resident of the South Coast,  
8 I was born and brought up in Fall River. I  
9 presently live in Dartmouth, and I work in New  
10 Bedford, and I have traveled Route 24 for some H-076.02  
11 30 years, and the traffic on 24 has gotten worse and  
12 worse and worse each year. There was a time you  
13 could make it all the way down to Route 128. Now  
14 you can get backed up from Brockton or Bridgewater  
15 or Taunton, and then it's just a miserable ride  
16 going and sometimes coming back. It's very  
17 stressful. It does impact the quality of life for  
18 the commuters that have to do the traveling.

19 As a parent, my son is a second-year H-076.03  
20 student in college in Boston, and he would come home  
21 a lot more often, and my wife and I would love to  
22 have him, if it was more convenient. Right now he  
23 does come into Lakeville. Sometimes we pick him up  
24 in Quincy, and sometimes we take him back and forth,



1 but that's an issue that a lot of parents in this  
2 area have to deal with and students have to deal  
3 with.

4 As a taxpayer, you've made a very  
5 compelling case. It's a cost-benefit thing, and I  
6 won't get into all of it, but it just clearly makes  
7 a lot more sense that we -- and the benefits  
8 outweigh tremendously the costs of not taking action  
9 on this and doing that as quickly as we possibly  
10 can.

H-076.04

11 And, finally, as Executive Director of  
12 the Workforce Board, it is a jobs matter. It's  
13 economic development as well as environmental issues  
14 that would make a strong case for. Again, the  
15 benefits far outweigh the costs.

H-076.05

16 So we would ask that you would work in  
17 support of a commuter rail to the South Coast as  
18 quickly as we possibly could have it.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Our next speaker,  
23 Michele Paul who will be followed by Jeffrey Rocha.

24 MICHELE PAUL: Hello. My name is

1 Michele Paul. I'm here on behalf of the City of  
2 Fall River, the Fall River Office of Economic  
3 Development. I'm also a life-long resident of the  
4 Town of Swansea, and I'm an environmental engineer;  
5 and from each of these perspectives, I can  
6 wholeheartedly support the electric route through  
7 Stoughton.

H-077.01

8 I can, you know, echo all of the  
9 sentiments and all of the reasons to come to the  
10 South Coast and all of the reasons that we need  
11 to -- to have that connectivity to Boston.

H-077.02

12 Economic development, just feeling like  
13 we're actually part of the community of  
14 Massachusetts. It's been a long time coming, and my  
15 two favorite gateway cities of Fall River and New  
16 Bedford cannot afford to have Lucy pull the football  
17 from Charlie Brown any more.

18 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, ma'am.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Jeffrey  
21 Rocha.

22 JEFFREY ROCHA: Good evening. My name  
23 is Jeffrey Rocha. I am a CPA and resident of both  
24 New Bedford and St. John, in the US Virgin Islands.

H-078.01

1 I wanted to approach this from a  
2 different perspective for the Army Corps of  
3 Engineers. Let you know you can get this done.

4 The island of St. John is 20 square  
5 miles. It's three by seven. It's two-thirds US  
6 National Park. Okay? In the wintertimes, we  
7 transport 200,000 people a day through the national  
8 park waters, through the national parks, so people  
9 touch it, feel it, see it, smell it, and send them  
10 right back over those federal park waters again  
11 undamaged. Please don't let our neighbors to the  
12 north let you believe for a minute it can't be done.  
13 Because it can. And that same place up north is  
14 where the traffic jam starts on Route 24. Okay?

15 Lastly, shortest distance between two  
16 points is a straight line. Stoughton is the  
17 straight line, and I was surprised it didn't happen  
18 sooner. Cape Wind is here. It's coming. This is  
19 the staging area for it. We have the power coming  
20 in the form of electricity to operate the train  
21 safely and efficiently.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

24 (Applause.)

1 MR. ROSENBERG: Next speaker, Hannah  
2 Martin.

3 Ariane Martin.

4 Ladies and gentlemen, is there anybody  
5 here who did not -- who did not speak, did not fill  
6 out a card to speak, or who wishes to speak now?

7 Please, sir, come on down.

8 When you come down to the microphone,  
9 please state your name. If you would spell your  
10 last name for our stenographer and provide us your  
11 comment.

12 CHRISTIAN SMITH: My name is Christian  
13 Smith. Do you need help with that?

14 (Laughter.)

15 CHRISTIAN SMITH: Okay. I'm the  
16 President of GreenFleet. We're an after-school  
17 program here in New Bedford. We encourage at-risk  
18 youth to believe in their futures and to believe in  
19 themselves through hard work, job skills, and  
20 environmental stewardship.

21 Now, this rail project is an opportunity  
22 for them. It's also an opportunity for  
23 Massachusetts in the environmental sense. We're  
24 going to take all these cars off the road.

H-079.01



1 Everybody's said all this before. We've heard it,  
2 but this is important for my kids' futures, not only  
3 in the respect that they're going to have a good  
4 environment to be in, but they're going to have job  
5 opportunities that are going to exist, not only in  
6 New Bedford from what we bring in with the commuter  
7 rail, but also the ability to stretch out and flap  
8 their wings a little bit and get out of New Bedford  
9 in order to find some work and to come back and be a  
10 part, a meaningful part of this community.

11 So, I implore you, please, do everything H-079.02  
12 you can to make sure that we have an environmentally  
13 sensitive electric rail running through Stoughton to  
14 New Bedford.

15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

17 Is there anybody here who has not spoken  
18 that wishes to provide comment?

19 Yes, sir, please come down to the  
20 microphone. State your name, spell your last name.

21 THOMAS SARGENT: Thank you. My name is  
22 Thomas Sargent, S-A-R-G-E-N-T. I live in New  
23 Bedford.

24 And I would like to register my support H-080.01

1 for the Stoughton route, and all of the reasons that  
2 have been explained and so forth. I say, you know,  
3 let's get the show on the road.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. ROSENBERG: Thank you, sir.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. ROSENBERG: Ladies and gentlemen, is  
8 there anybody here who has not spoken but wishes to  
9 provide comment?

10 Ladies and gentlemen, Lieutenant Colonel  
11 Howell.

12 (Applause.)

13 LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWELL: We have  
14 heard a great many thoughtful statements this  
15 evening. Careful analysis will be required before a  
16 determination can be made and a decision rendered.

17 Again, written statements may be  
18 submitted to the Corps of Engineers until 27 May  
19 2011. They will receive equal consideration with  
20 those presented tonight.

21 Each question or issue raised will be  
22 addressed in our Final EIS regarding the Commonwealth  
23 of Massachusetts South Coast Rail permit application.

24 We, the Corps of Engineers, extend our

1 appreciation to all who took the time to involve  
2 themselves in this public review process.

3 And, finally, before I conclude this  
4 hearing, I'd like to extend my appreciation to the  
5 City of New Bedford, the Keith Middle School for the  
6 use of this fine facility tonight, and the City of  
7 New Bedford Police Department for their support and  
8 protection.

9 Once again, thank you all for taking the  
10 time to provide us with your thoughts, your  
11 comments, and your concerns.

12 Good night and best travels.

13 (Applause.)

14  
15 (At 9:19 p.m., the public hearing was  
16 adjourned.)

ORAL STATEMENTS

CHUCK DADE: Hi. My name's Chuck Dade, D-A-D-E, and I live in New Bedford, Mass., a native and long-time resident of the general area, and my descendants are as well. I am a vet. My father was a vet, and my great grandparents were the parents of the largest veteran family in the country ever who hence served in World War II.

Okay. I'm also an Army engineer, but it happens to be in power generation. What I would like to say is pretty simple. I'm just thinking if they're thinking about changing the location to Attleboro, as opposed to Stoughton, this is an idea that I have been thinking about for a long time. Attleboro would make it an even easier decision, I would think, is that I think instead of having a train go directly to Boston, we should have a train that goes to Providence, because Providence is already connected to Boston. Providence is connected to New York. Providence is connected to D.C., and all points connected to those points. So I would think it would be a better expenditure of federal dollars, both from the Nation's perspective

H-081.01



1 of access to the South Coast and Cape Cod and the  
2 islands as well as South Coast, Cape Cod and the  
3 Islands' access to the rest of the country if we had  
4 a train that went to Providence, because they  
5 wouldn't give us not only that, but it would give us  
6 access to Providence, so you would be able to hop a  
7 daily to Providence, if you live in Providence, and  
8 back you wouldn't have to use a car, and you would  
9 be able to have maybe a ten minute extra ride to  
10 Boston to transfer, because there probably a high  
11 speed train 20 minutes to Boston -- I mean to  
12 Providence, and probably 40 minutes to Boston from  
13 there. I just think that is the way we should go.  
14 I don't think we should go directly to Boston. From  
15 a federal perspective, I think we should go to  
16 Providence and then to Boston. I think that's a  
17 much better way of doing it once and for all.

18 I think that's good. Okay. Thank you.

19 Well, I should add if you are going to  
20 spend billions of dollars, you should get it right  
21 the first time, not play catch-up to an old idea.  
22 The old idea -- we have been fighting in this region  
23 to be treated with equity to have train access to  
24 get to Boston, and there has been a lot of -- the

1 general mentality, we're at that last hurdle to get  
2 to Boston, but they may miss the boat to the bigger  
3 idea of getting to New York, D.C. and Boston.

4 Okay. Thank you.

5 SCOTT W. LANG: My name is Scott W. Lang.  
6 I'm the mayor of the City of New Bedford. My last  
7 name is spelled L-A-N-G. My address is 3 Stetson  
8 Street, New Bedford.

9 I was elected in November of 2005 and  
10 have been keenly focused on bringing rail to New  
11 Bedford, Fall River, Taunton by way of the South  
12 Coast Rail Project. I believe that it is an  
13 absolutely vital transportation project for our  
14 portion of the state, which is the fastest growing  
15 region in Massachusetts.

H-082.01

16 I believe that it restores appropriate  
17 freight service, as well as passenger service, by  
18 way of a 21st century infrastructure project that  
19 will bring not only economic development opportunities  
20 for our area, but also fulfill a social, economic  
21 and environmental justice agenda for Southeastern  
22 Massachusetts. It will provide construction jobs in  
23 its inception during a period in our economy when we  
24 are struggling to get out of the worse recession

1 that we've had since the Depression.

2 It will then provide for detailed smart  
3 growth type projects along the rail, which will lead  
4 to enhancement of quality of life by way of better  
5 housing stock, better commercial and retail  
6 opportunities, and a transportation network that  
7 will allow our citizens to travel efficiently,  
8 inexpensively, and not only to the north, towards  
9 Boston, but also from Boston to our area. It is a  
10 project that in this area of the state has been  
11 discussed for the past 30 years.

12 In the late '50s rail service for  
13 passengers ceased in this area, and the people of  
14 Southeastern Massachusetts have desired a new look  
15 and then a project since the mid '80s.

16 Governor Dukakis, Governor Weld, Governor  
17 Cellucci, Governor Swift, Governor Romney have all  
18 made various statements on it, but Governor Patrick  
19 decided to bring this project to fruition. There  
20 has been a great deal of planning work done in the  
21 past four years, and I believe that the planning has  
22 been thorough and appropriate for this type of 21st  
23 century project.

24 A number of different routes have been

1 looked at, as well as a number of different  
2 possibilities for moving people en mass, but it's  
3 clear to us that the only viable alternative is  
4 rail, and that it's completely appropriate to go  
5 through the Hockomock Swamp from Taunton through the  
6 swamp and up to Boston.

7 The main reasons that I've heard that  
8 the rail is not something that people support is  
9 because first it is an expensive project. In  
10 reality, the project is a project for the entire  
11 eastern section of the state, not just Southeastern  
12 Mass., and the project involves many different  
13 components, including a total rehabilitation of the  
14 South Station corridor, which is something that's  
15 needed to service all the rail that runs through the  
16 eastern part of the state.

17 In addition, the people of Southeastern  
18 Massachusetts have subsidized the T and many  
19 building projects regarding transportation in the  
20 inner 128 belt. So it's an equity issue when you  
21 look at how this project should be funded and  
22 whether or not everyone should share in the funding  
23 of the project. It's a state project; therefore, I  
24 believe it's appropriate that the state and the



1 federal government finance the project.

2 I think that what it will do is help us  
3 with our energy independence by getting more cars  
4 off the road than any other way that I know of. It  
5 will help clear up congestion, which is one of our  
6 major drivers on air quality and pollution. It will  
7 also be a green project from the standpoint of the  
8 building of the project as well as the running of  
9 the project. I favor high speed electric  
10 transportation, rather than relying on diesel. I  
11 think diesel is -- is a technology, quite frankly,  
12 that harkens back to an iron horse type of  
13 mentality. I believe that we should come up with  
14 the fastest system, which means electric, and it  
15 also means being coordinated by a sophisticated  
16 computerized routing that will allow for the  
17 quickest journey to any station and up from  
18 New Bedford to Boston, from Fall River to Boston.

19 As far as the -- as far as the issue of  
20 whether or not there should be an extension of time  
21 in which people should comment on the Army Corps of  
22 Engineers' environmental study, I believe that this  
23 project has been completely vetted in public and  
24 transparent now for over four years, and I don't

1 believe an extension is warranted. I believe that  
2 the May 27th date is appropriate. The longer that  
3 we delay the permitting process, the longer it will  
4 take to -- to actually begin to implement the rail  
5 project.

6 I think that the way that I would like  
7 to see the rail built is in phases. I believe that  
8 the New Bedford to Taunton, Fall River to Taunton  
9 rail beds are already in place. They're used for  
10 freight. They need to be upgraded, and I would ask  
11 that the state and federal government begin that  
12 section of this rail project immediately. I think  
13 the permitting is very, very minimal and the laying  
14 continuously welded rail is something that we easily  
15 have capability of doing. It will put many people  
16 to work very quickly and will lead towards a  
17 shortening of the actual project.

18 By beginning the project now, you'll not  
19 only get an economic stimulus going, but by the time  
20 the permitting is done through the swamp, we will  
21 have already reached Taunton and can continue to  
22 move the project in a very, very seamless manner.  
23 So I would ask that the -- the portions of the  
24 project be broken up into a southern triangle and

1 then a swamp component. And then from the swamp up  
2 to Boston. I also would ask that the work on South  
3 Station begin in a contemporaneous way with the  
4 southern triangle so that the work that will need to  
5 be done is simply going through with continuously  
6 welded rail through the swamp. I understand that  
7 there are some trestles that need to be built and  
8 some additional engineering, and this will speed up  
9 the project dramatically.

10 I think, lastly, we know that when the  
11 original studies were done back in the late '80s,  
12 gasoline was 80 cents or 88 cents a gallon. It's  
13 now \$4 in the City of New Bedford. We know that the  
14 drive time to Boston at that time was an hour. We  
15 know now that the drive time at most times of the  
16 day is an hour and a half to two hours. Back in  
17 1988, parking was \$10 for the day in Boston. We now  
18 know it's 35 to \$40 a day. The only way from an  
19 economically viable standpoint that you can move  
20 people up and down this north/south corridor,  
21 south/north corridor is by building the rail.

H-082.08

22 The other thing that the rail will bring  
23 is freight that will be moved efficiently, much more  
24 rapidly than it is now, much more safely than it is

H-082.09

1 now. The City of New Bedford, as well as the City  
2 of Fall River, are building freight capability using  
3 our port cities to bring in import and export cargo,  
4 and this is something that the rail will not only  
5 allow for in a much more -- in a much more efficient  
6 manner, but also will open up the -- the marine  
7 highway regarding short sea shipping, as well  
8 as -- as well as roll-on roll-off cargo.

9 The federal government has begun  
10 replacing hundred-year-old bridges that service the  
11 rail system in New Bedford. We currently have three  
12 bridge projects going, somewhere in the vicinity of  
13 \$20 million. These are absolutely necessary to  
14 bring a passenger system into the City as well as  
15 refurbish the freight capability. We have one  
16 additional bridge that is over Route 18 and Wamsutta  
17 Street. This bridge needs approximately a 25  
18 percent restoration as 25 percent of the bridge is  
19 100 years old. The rest of it is approximately 20  
20 years old. I ask the federal government provide the  
21 money to rebuild this 100-year portion of the bridge  
22 which will be done, I believe, in a very, very  
23 expeditious manner, and it will not cause the shut  
24 down of the -- of the route after we complete the



1 three-bridge project. So it seems to me it makes a  
2 lot more sense to provide the funding, which I  
3 believe is somewhere between 5 and \$7 million to  
4 finish up all the rail bridges in the City, rather  
5 than doing three and then having to shut down the  
6 rail to do the last 25 percent of one.

7 In addition, that last 25 percent of the  
8 Wamsutta Street bridge is the closest bridge to the  
9 harbor transportation system, which means that we  
10 would not be able to use the harbor transportation  
11 system until that bridge has been rebuilt. So the  
12 time for this, I believe, is right now as well. So  
13 my message simply is let's begin to build it. Let's  
14 begin to build it in a way that is -- that is 21st  
15 century technology, which means electric, and let us  
16 begin to plan for the areas around -- around the  
17 line by way of smart growth, by way of station  
18 planning, and by way of beginning to think that in  
19 terms of moving people to the station by way of  
20 bike, by way of car, by way of bus, by way of  
21 walking, but let's start spending our time planning  
22 for this as we go ahead and begin to build the  
23 southern section of the rail.

24 I thank you very much for your attention,

1 and we're very excited about bringing rail to the  
2 City of New Bedford. Thank you.

3 HANNAH MARTIN: Hannah Martin,  
4 M-A-R-T-I-N, 209 Liberty Street, New Bedford,  
5 Massachusetts.

6 My question is: Why would the Army  
7 Corps of Engineers produce and build a railroad  
8 between New Bedford and Boston when without traffic  
9 it could take one hour or 45 minutes; and with  
10 traffic, it would only take two hours?

H-083.01

11 Thank you.

12 ARIANE MARTIN: My name is Ariane  
13 MARTIN, M-A-R-T-I-N, 209 Liberty Street, New  
14 Bedford, Mass.

15 I think that the rail connecting Boston  
16 to -- from Boston to New Bedford is of extreme  
17 importance. Economically and environmentally, it  
18 would make a sound choice on our behalf and create  
19 more jobs and bring in more revenue to the State of  
20 Massachusetts.

H-084.01

21 My concern for the wetlands, I don't  
22 want them to be disturbed, if we don't have to, and  
23 if there's an alternative way to go around the  
24 wetlands and make it be environmentally safe then I

H-084.02

1 think we should do that, but we still need to -- We H-084.02  
2 need to continue to connect the South Shore with the  
3 rest of the State of Massachusetts.

4 Thank you.

5 BRUCE DUARTE, JR.: My name is Bruce  
6 Duarte, Jr. That is B-R-U-C-E D-U-A-R-T-E, J-R. My  
7 address is 804 Kempton Street in the City of New  
8 Bedford. I am also a New Bedford City Councillor.  
9 I represent Ward 4.

10 I am making this statement in support of H-085.01  
11 the Stoughton line for rail; and you know, I'm going  
12 to be as simple as I possibly can by stating jobs,  
13 jobs, jobs. Economic justice for our South Coast.  
14 The fact of the matter is this is not just about the  
15 South Coast going to Boston, but more to me it's  
16 about Boston coming to the South Coast, enjoying our  
17 restaurants, enjoying our museums, our beaches,  
18 enjoying our national park, the Whaling National  
19 Park, things of that nature that I think we're  
20 not -- the folks in Boston aren't given the  
21 opportunity to see because of transportation issues  
22 in some instances.

23 This is about environmental justice. H-085.02  
24 This is about taking thousands of vehicles off our

1 state highways and allowing folks to travel on the  
2 train and not putting all that carbon in the area as  
3 far as that is concerned.

4 So, my statement, I think, is absolutely  
5 for, absolutely for this South Coast Rail. I don't  
6 believe that we should extend any periods. I think,  
7 as stated, that the information has been out there  
8 since '09. We're in '11. This project needs to go  
9 forward ASAP, a bird in the hand so to speak. I  
10 think if we wait too long then we may lose funding  
11 that's critically important, as we all know, to get  
12 this project done, and I'm talking about federal  
13 funding.

14 Certainly, I want to thank the Governor  
15 for his leadership. I want to thank the Army Corps  
16 of Engineers for their interest and commitment into  
17 this project. I think that they'll do a fine job,  
18 and they'll come out with what I believe will be a  
19 favorable report for this project, and I think it  
20 will be favorable for the Stoughton line as far as  
21 that's concerned. Kristina Egan has been great.  
22 She has been inclusive. She has been informative,  
23 as far as that's concerned; and again, I will finish  
24 by saying what I started with, I support the South



1 Coast Rail Project.

2 Thank you.

3 CHRISTOPHER MARKEY: My name is  
4 Christopher Markey. The last name is spelled  
5 M-A-R-K-E-Y, 48 William Street, W-I-L-L-I-A-M,  
6 Dartmouth, Mass.

7 I'm a State Representative for the Ninth  
8 Bristol District, and I just wanted to add to my  
9 comments made in the public hearing in regard to the  
10 economic development of the South Coast, which will  
11 be benefitted from the South Coast Rail Project.

12 As I mentioned briefly that approximately  
13 80 years ago two bridges were built across the  
14 Cape Cod Canal, and there were very few bridges --  
15 very few vehicles and very few roads, and we look  
16 back 80 years, and we wonder what would we do  
17 without those two bridges in that economic  
18 development that has developed as a result of people  
19 being able to be transported from the mainland to  
20 Cape Cod.

21 I find that the South Coast Rail will  
22 have the same effect on the South Coast. The  
23 development of the South Coast is really essential  
24 for the development of Massachusetts as well. This

H-086.01

1 is one of the areas in Eastern Massachusetts that  
2 has not been fully developed, and I think having the  
3 access to Boston would allow for significant  
4 positive economic development where we would grow  
5 our tax base, establish great education institutions,  
6 and allow for our citizens to be the most productive  
7 they could possibly be. So, therefore, I'm  
8 absolutely in favor of the Stoughton Route for the  
9 development of the South Coast Rail.

10 Thanks.

11 T.K. ROY: My name is T.K. Roy. T  
12 stands for Tridib, T-R-I-D-I-B. The last name is  
13 Roy, R-O-Y, and my address is 216 Blackmore Pond  
14 Road, West Wareham, Massachusetts 02576.

15 I was making some comments in the  
16 hearing, but time ran out, so I'm going to finish  
17 with the rest of it, or do you want me to start,  
18 give the beginnings -- I think it may be easier to  
19 give the rest of it.

20 So these are some of the other additional  
21 things that I have to state. The rail will provide  
22 an easy access, convenient and economic and fast  
23 connection to bring people of other areas to enjoy  
24 the nature's grandeur of this area, such as its nice

1 clean beaches, railroads and creeks, ponds and parks  
2 all over the area. This area is so close and yet so  
3 far because without rail people do not have access.

4 Boston and the suburbs have a great  
5 scarcity of housing, and the ones that are available  
6 are exorbitantly expensive. The South Coast, on the  
7 other hand, provides an abundance of housing  
8 facilities, nice waterfront locations, big nice  
9 lawns, much open space for growth and development,  
10 and to live in luxury and comfort, rather than the  
11 cramped accommodation of the Boston area.

12 People can live here and work in Boston.  
13 It's very easy access with the rail commute. It's  
14 another win-win situation.

15 Convenient access to the best medical  
16 facilities for the area residents. As we know,  
17 Boston has one of the best and most advanced medical  
18 facilities and state-of-the-art practicing  
19 physicians and specialists. The rail will provide  
20 an easy access to these facilities for the people of  
21 this area. No driving, no parking headaches to  
22 travel to Boston.

23 Another advantage is Boston is loaded  
24 with many facilities of entertainment and learning.

1 centers, such as theaters, sports arenas, museums,  
2 musical halls, great restaurants, which will be  
3 easily accessible to the area residents. Now also  
4 people commute to Boston to enjoy those, but driving  
5 back and forth and parking are always big headaches,  
6 and that's why it is less attractive for them. With  
7 the rail, that will make them easy access, and they  
8 would be able to use more of these facilities.

9 Again, it will help the business there  
10 in the Boston area, and it will make better use of  
11 this facilities for many of which our tax dollars  
12 are also used to support or subsidize.

13 So with those, I would like to say that  
14 I am convinced that the South Coast Rail will be a  
15 big plus point both for the Boston area as well as  
16 for the South Coast area.

17 I believe the -- out of the alternatives  
18 the electric train will be a better choice to build.  
19 The initial cost may be higher, a bit, but in the  
20 long run it will be more economical. It will save  
21 time, less noise, and less pollution.

22 Also it will be amenable to use newer  
23 and environmental friendly energy of the future,  
24 such as wind energy and solar energy. Also it will



1 be amenable to high-speed technology, just like the  
2 bullet train or high speed train can be used with  
3 electric trains.

4 And I also support the Stoughton  
5 Alternative, which would be more direct, and it will  
6 save time for the commuters, both for New Bedford  
7 and Fall River.

8 I also would like to mention that no  
9 extension of the hearing beyond May 27th is necessary.  
10 We have already had many studies; and, therefore, it  
11 will be my request that the committee takes a  
12 decision on this thing in favor of building the  
13 project as early as possible.

14 Thanks for your patience, and I hope you  
15 will have a very positive recommendation to make  
16 this South Coast Rail as a reality for which the  
17 community will thank you enormously. It will be an  
18 asset for the country once it is completed.

19 Thank you.

20 DAVID BENWAY: It's David Benway,  
21 B-E-N-W-A-Y, B, as in boy. It's 165 Union Street,  
22 New Bedford, Mass. 02740.

23 I just want to say that I'm in favor of  
24 the Stoughton Route, not the Whittenton Route. I

1 would like to see the train electric, and in these H-088.01  
2 tough economic times with gas prices reaching \$4 a  
3 gallon we need to take the 8,000 cars off the road.  
4 Now is the best time to do this.

5 Plymouth, Hingham, Lakeville all have H-088.02  
6 the rail. Why doesn't New Bedford and Fall River  
7 have it? Is it something to do with poor, black,  
8 Hispanic? You know, please stop the economic  
9 injustice.

10 Do not extend the comment period. The H-088.03  
11 people who oppose it, the rail system coming to  
12 New Bedford and Fall River, already have access to  
13 the rail. This is not fair.

14 I want to thank the Army Corps of  
15 Engineers for their report, and let's see, some  
16 people have been waiting for this rail system their  
17 whole entire life, and they are afraid that they're  
18 going to be deceased before they see it come  
19 through. Some of these people are in their early  
20 60s. Let's make sure that they can have a ride on  
21 the rail system to Boston.

22 Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

23 DEBORAH ROHER: My name is Deborah  
24 Roher, R-O-H-E-R. I live at 240 Tremont Street, in

1 New Bedford, and I have lived in this area for 24  
2 years. I'm not an engineer or an ecologist by  
3 training, and I deeply respect the decisions and  
4 evaluations that the Corps has to make for this  
5 project, but I am by predilection an ecologist. I  
6 didn't drive until I was 28. I lived in Eastern  
7 Kentucky for almost six years before I bought a car.  
8 And when I move to this area, I remember it was  
9 really not long after I moved to this area that I  
10 attended my first public hearing on the question of  
11 restoring rail, passenger rail service from this  
12 area to Boston, a subject that was of deep interest  
13 to me. I've lived most of my adult life in places  
14 where I got around without a car, and I remember  
15 very clearly from that hearing the diagrams and the  
16 presentation and the discussion of the three  
17 possible routes, and the conclusion that the Taunton  
18 Attleboro route was infeasible, because there were  
19 too many grade crossings, and the extension of -- of  
20 the route from Middleborough was infeasible because  
21 it would create such a back -- such a bottleneck in  
22 Braintree that you couldn't really run enough trains  
23 along that route to make it an attractive commuter  
24 option; and then there was the Stoughton Route,

1 which clearly was the feasible and preferred route,  
2 and it is mind-boggling to me that 20 years later  
3 we're still having the same discussion.

4 As I say, I take very seriously the  
5 issues raised about endangered species and damage to  
6 the wetlands, but in the intervening 20 years, I've  
7 seen Route 24 expanded and repaved, I don't know how  
8 many times; and moreover, the new entrances and  
9 exits built off routes -- Route 24 and all along the  
10 Route 140 and Route 24 corridor all of the  
11 sprawl-type developments, the strip malls with the  
12 impervious paving taking up who knows how many acres  
13 of what used to be very nice meadows, the  
14 destructive single family suburban subdivisions,  
15 which have been the predominant kind of development,  
16 and I've also seen all of that development benefit  
17 the suburbs and further impoverish the city. So I  
18 really hope that the outcome of this process will be  
19 a determination that we can have our rail service  
20 from Fall River and New Bedford. I believe that it  
21 will be environmental as well as an economic and  
22 cultural enrichment benefit to the state and to all  
23 of us in this area.

24 ANGELA BANNISTER: My name is Angela

H-089.01



1 Bannister, and I am a New Bedford resident. I live  
2 at 321 Query Street. I have lived here for a year  
3 and a half. I graduate college in two weeks, and I  
4 am scared for this economic area. I would like to  
5 one day call New Bedford my home. I would like to  
6 raise a family here, and I would like to have access  
7 to Boston, and I think that the -- the Stoughton  
8 line is the best reliable and efficient means of  
9 transportation for this area.

H-090.01

10 New Bedford has a very bad reputation  
11 currently due to the lack of accessibility and  
12 inequality that we unfortunately have; and again,  
13 I'm a young new grad, and I would like to be able to  
14 build my home in New Bedford and still have access  
15 to jobs in Boston and be able to provide for my  
16 family if I -- if I decide to stay in New Bedford  
17 and live and work.

18 So thank you to everyone that's put  
19 energy towards this.

20 MATTHEW COES: My name is Matthew Coes,  
21 C-O-E-S, and I live at 4 Hedge Street in Fairhaven,  
22 Mass.

23 Thank you for your thorough review of  
24 the South Coast Rail alternatives. I support the

H-091.01

1 Stoughton Route with electric service and oppose an H-091.01  
2 extension of review. I am an environmentalist. I  
3 commute to work with a bicycle, but I am a big  
4 picture environmentalist, and in this case the  
5 benefits far outweigh the costs.

6 I moved to New Bedford three years ago  
7 for work in the city's burgeoning art community. My  
8 employer works primarily with advertising and design  
9 clients within the Route 128 belt. We offer studio  
10 visits and delivery to and from Boston. And  
11 visitors, once we are able to convince them to  
12 travel, are amazed at what New Bedford has to offer.  
13 I've lived previously in Salem, Mass., and Brooklyn,  
14 New York, and there I used public transport  
15 extensively to commute into major cities.

16 The South Coast Rail will be a vigorous H-091.02  
17 economic course and provide the typical  
18 opportunities for both ends of the rail project.

19 Thank you for the opportunity.

20 SCOTT W. LANG: This is Scott Lang,  
21 Mayor of the City of New Bedford.

22 There were a couple of other issues that  
23 I wanted to address at the end of the evening. The H-092.01  
24 first one was the issue regarding subsidy of this

1 rail project and the idea that this project would be  
2 unduly subsidized by other areas of the state. The  
3 fact is that this is a state project, a project that  
4 will benefit all citizens in Massachusetts, and  
5 currently all citizens subsidize all forms of  
6 highway, airport, train, harbor projects.

7 The idea that we would be asked to  
8 subsidize all other parts of the state regarding  
9 rail and then the issue would be brought up as to  
10 whether or not other parts of the regions of  
11 Massachusetts should subsidize New Bedford,  
12 Fall River, Taunton's rail is not appropriate and is  
13 certainly not equitable from the standpoint of equal  
14 protection and in the whole theory of the benefit  
15 for all within the state. And it creates a  
16 disproportionate advantage to live outside of New  
17 Bedford based on the fact that we don't have the  
18 infrastructure for transportation that other areas  
19 of the state would have.

20 The other thing that I would like to  
21 state is this idea that the train would be an  
22 inconvenience or an imposition to pass through  
23 different communities. Again, with the -- with the  
24 eye on the fact that this benefits the entire state,

H-092.01

H-092.02

1 there is no community that should put up a barrier  
2 to progress for any region of the state and for the  
3 entire state. Just as if a town would argue against  
4 having a highway go through their town or  
5 infrastructure projects within their town that  
6 benefit the entire region to argue that the rail  
7 going through a specific town is not fair to the  
8 town really misses the point of a unified sovereign  
9 state entity. So I would hope that that is not an  
10 issue that in any way affects the Army Corps'  
11 decision.

12 On a whole, if you look at the balance  
13 of this project, it will, in fact, benefit the  
14 entire state. It will increase the tax base in the  
15 state, decrease unemployment within the state and  
16 lead towards a quality of life for all those who  
17 live in the state being enhanced.

18 It also will help clean up the  
19 environment. So if you look at this as a project  
20 that not only affects the New Bedford, Fall River,  
21 Taunton, South Coast region, but look at it as a  
22 project that affects the good of the whole, this  
23 project should go forward.

24 So, now I'm done.



WRITTEN STATEMENTS

May 5, 2011

Richard K. Sullivan, Secretary  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Attention: MEPA Office: Aisling O'Shea  
100 Cambridge St., Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Director,

As Mayor of the City of Taunton, I, along with the unanimous support of the several editions of the Taunton Municipal Council have enthusiastically supported the direct Stoughton Route that will provide rail service to our community and to the South Coast region in a more timely and cost effective manner. The direct Stoughton Route will travel south from Boston through the communities of Stoughton, Easton and Raynham over the same railroad bed that had been used by passenger trains over 150 years ago. Once entering Taunton, the trains will stop at a station planned along Dean Street (Route

H-093.01

1 44) where my administration has designed and  
2 endorsed a Transit Oriented District (T.O.D.). The  
3 trains would continue southward through Taunton to  
4 another station planned behind Depot Drive near the  
5 intersection of Route 140 and Route 24. The route  
6 would have only five (5) at-grade crossings through  
7 its entire length through Taunton. The direct  
8 Stoughton Route provides for the quickest route  
9 between the South Coast communities and Boston and  
10 it would provide, according to the studies, the  
11 highest ridership.

12  
13 The citizens of Taunton through their elected  
14 representatives have gone on record as in favor of  
15 the direct Stoughton Route, and they have also gone  
16 on record as emphatically opposed to the Attleboro  
17 Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route,  
18 as those options would provide from fourteen to  
19 fifteen (15) at-grade crossings within our community,  
20 and effectively cut off public safety operations  
21 within our community. The Attleboro Route and the  
22 Whittenton Alternative Route would also cause the  
23 trips between Boston and the South Coast communities  
24 to be longer and less cost effective. The Attleboro

H-093.02

1 Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route  
2 would cause the trains to run through our heavily  
3 congested residential area where the houses are  
4 right up against the tracks. The noise mitigation  
5 measures that would be necessary would also add to  
6 the costs of this route.

7  
8 Attleboro officials have long contested that route  
9 for environmental reason. My administration with  
10 the unanimous support of the Taunton Municipal  
11 Council in Taunton has worked closely with the  
12 Selectman of Dighton and Norton to endorse the  
13 application Three Mile River Area of Critical  
14 Environmental Concern (A.C.E.C.), which was recently  
15 adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The  
16 Attleboro Route runs directly through this A.C.E.C.

17  
18 On behalf of the citizens of Taunton, I want to  
19 express our sincere and emphatic support for the  
20 direct Stoughton Route that will provide the highest  
21 ridership, the quickest trip from the South Coast to  
22 Boston, and provides the least impact to our  
23 citizens. I believe the only intelligent choice is  
24 the direct Stoughton Route. I look forward to see

1       that route adopted and for our community to become  
2       the gateway to the South Coast.

3  
4       Respectfully,

5  
6       Charles Crowley,  
7       Mayor

8  
9                               \* \* \* \* \*



C E R T I F I C A T E

We, Marianne Kusa-Ryll, Certified  
Realtime Reporter, and Julie Thomson Riley,  
Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that  
the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate  
transcription of our stenographic notes on May 5,  
2011, to the best of our knowledge, skill, and  
ability.

/s/ Marianne Kusa-Ryll  
Marianne Kusa-Ryll, RDR, CRR

/s/ Julie Thomson Riley  
Julie Thomson Riley, RDR, CRR

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<p><u>wings</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 140:8</p> <p><u>wintertimes</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 138:6</p> <p><u>wise</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 60:15</p> <p><u>wish</u> <sup>[8]</sup> - 8:23, 9:7, 35:9, 35:11, 54:19, 55:11, 55:13, 78:4</p> <p><u>wishes</u> <sup>[5]</sup> - 8:22, 36:7, 139:6, 140:18, 141:8</p> <p><u>wishing</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 41:17</p> <p><u>woman</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 86:14</p> <p><u>wonder</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 156:16</p> <p><u>wonderful</u> <sup>[5]</sup> - 67:20, 77:17, 108:16, 108:22, 120:21</p> <p><u>word</u> <sup>[2]</sup> - 15:16, 18:10</p> <p><u>WORK</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 53:20</p> <p><u>workers</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 89:1, 89:3, 89:12</p> <p><u>Workforce</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 73:16, 135:5, 136:12</p> <p><u>workforce</u> <sup>[6]</sup> - 61:21, 74:13, 89:7, 89:11, 133:21, 134:1</p> <p><u>works</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 62:6, 120:15, 165:8</p> <p><u>world</u> <sup>[2]</sup> - 114:13, 115:20</p> <p><u>World</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 143:9</p> <p><u>worse</u> <sup>[4]</sup> - 135:11, 135:12, 145:24</p> <p><u>worth</u> <sup>[4]</sup> - 71:22, 96:9, 98:10, 111:22</p> <p><u>wrap</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 132:6</p> <p><u>write</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 28:1, 29:2, 29:6</p> <p><u>writing</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 27:5, 33:21, 34:2</p> <p><u>written</u> <sup>[10]</sup> - 9:10, 24:16, 36:4, 36:7, 41:19, 65:15, 88:7, 90:9, 141:17</p> <p><u>Written</u> <sup>[2]</sup> - 41:21, 42:1</p> <p><u>WRITTEN</u> <sup>[2]</sup> - 6:1, 168:1</p> <p><u>wrote</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 86:14</p>	<p>135:19, 151:10, 164:2</p> <p><u>years</u> <sup>[50]</sup> - 32:14, 57:18, 58:8, 60:7, 64:8, 78:9, 78:10, 83:12, 83:14, 84:12, 84:14, 84:19, 91:7, 91:12, 91:20, 100:9, 103:20, 104:24, 105:2, 105:6, 105:9, 106:1, 107:9, 107:12, 107:16, 107:20, 111:15, 111:21, 120:15, 120:22, 122:2, 126:12, 127:8, 132:1, 132:4, 135:11, 146:11, 146:21, 148:24, 151:19, 151:20, 156:13, 156:16, 162:2, 162:7, 163:2, 163:6, 165:6, 168:23</p> <p><u>yellow</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 57:24</p> <p><u>yesterday</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 128:1</p> <p><u>yield</u> <sup>[2]</sup> - 19:5, 19:10</p> <p><u>York</u> <sup>[4]</sup> - 129:6, 143:21, 145:3, 165:14</p> <p><u>young</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 164:13</p> <p><u>yourself</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 20:6, 35:16, 55:9</p> <p><u>youth</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 139:18</p>
	<b>Z</b>
	<p><u>zipper</u> <sup>[4]</sup> - 13:20, 17:5, 47:1, 47:2</p> <p><u>Zone</u> <sup>[3]</sup> - 50:20, 50:21, 51:1</p> <p><u>zoning</u> <sup>[2]</sup> - 82:8, 85:1</p> <p><u>Zoo</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 115:21</p> <p><u>Zoological</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 115:22</p> <p><u>zoos</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 115:21</p>
	<b>§</b>
	<u>§404</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 50:2
<b>X</b>	
<u>XX Section</u> <sup>[1]</sup> - 39:19	
<b>Y</b>	
<p><u>year</u> <sup>[10]</sup> - 11:20, 60:22, 67:10, 88:22, 104:2, 116:3, 135:12,</p>	

Part B  
Responses to Comments

## **Federal Agencies**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.01	United States Department of the Interior	The DEIS refers to areas that have potential vernal pools throughout the document. The Department recommends that these areas be evaluated to determine their presence or absence, as well as their quality in order to permit avoidance, minimization, or mitigation for impacts to existing vernal pools and their supporting habitat.	As described in Chapter 4.14, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area. The Report includes measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts.
L-054.02	United States Department of the Interior	According to our files, and from information provided to us by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, the northern red-bellied cooter only occurs along the existing Middleborough line near the Nemasket and Taunton Rivers. As it is our understanding that no work is planned along this section of the line at this time, we have no further concerns regarding this project and the northern red-bellied cooter. If our understanding of the project is incorrect, or if new information becomes available on the occurrence of listed species in the project area, this determination may be reconsidered.	No work along the Middleboro line is required for the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.03	United States Department of the Interior	<p>The Massachusetts Audubon Society has designated two Important Bird Areas (IBAs) within the Study Area: the Hockomock Swamp and the Freetown-Fall River State Forest/Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve. Table 4.14-1 lists birds that may be found in the project area. The list identifies several area-sensitive and forest-interior avian species such as the hermit thrush (<i>Catharus auttatus</i>), wood thrush (<i>Hylocichia mustelina</i>), chestnut-sided warbler (<i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i>), veery (<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>), black and white warbler (<i>Mniotilta varia</i>), black-throated blue warbler (<i>Dendroica caerulescens</i>), black-throated green warbler (<i>Dendroica virens</i>), Canada warbler (<i>Wilsonia canadensis</i>), ovenbird (<i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i>) and others. There are also wetland-dependent breeding birds listed in the table, such as the state-listed least bittern (<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>) and pied-billed grebe (<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>), northern waterthrush (<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>), Louisiana waterthrush (<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>) and common yellowthroat (<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>). A more detailed assessment of area-sensitive and wetland-dependent breeding bird species should be undertaken. We recommend that a site-specific breeding bird survey be conducted (if adequate existing data is not available) once a LEDPA has been identified. This information once incorporated in the mitigation plan is essential when defining species specific impacts, avoidance strategies, and mitigation measures necessary to offset or compensate for impacts to wetland-dependent migratory bird species and their associated habitats.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 describes potential impacts and mitigation measures for avian species, including time-of-year restrictions to protect migratory birds in sensitive habitats. A site-specific breeding bird survey is not necessary to evaluate the impacts of the alternatives--sensitive species that may be present in certain habitat types based on the species lists developed for the project are assumed to be present and mitigation measures developed accordingly.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.04	United States Department of the Interior	<p>The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department. Neither the MBTA nor its implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 21 provide for permitting of “incidental take” of migratory birds. While take of migratory birds does not include habitat destruction or alteration, direct taking of birds, nests, eggs, or parts thereof is likely to occur if clearing or other ground disturbance occurs within migratory bird nesting habitat during the nesting season when eggs or young are likely to be present. Vegetation removal activities should not occur during this time.</p> <p>The DEIS provides statements of fact and refers to surveys, but does not provide the scientific references throughout. We suggest that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) provide scientific references for factual statements and surveys, and include them in the bibliography section. Examples of statements without references include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 4.15-6: "Populations of pure blue-spotted salamanders occur north of the hybridization zone with Jefferson salamanders . . . There are 102 towns in Massachusetts where blue-spotted salamanders have been observed. Over 172 occurrences have been documented since 1981, as well as 27 historic occurrences that were documented prior to 1981."</li> <li>• Page 4.15-6: "... breeding season [blue-spotted salamanders] lasts from mid-March to late April. Eggs are often laid singly or in a small egg mass, which cling lightly to overhanging vegetation or fall to the bottom of the pond."</li> <li>• Page 4.15-7: "In Massachusetts, riparian areas are the preferred habitat of wood turtles... spend most of the spring and summer in mixed or deciduous forests, fields, hayfields, and riparian wetlands including wet meadows, bogs, and beaver ponds. They return to the streams in late summer or early fall to their favored overwintering location."</li> <li>• Page 4.15-13: "In June 2008, habitat evaluations and</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 4.14 identifies the time-of-year construction restrictions to protect migratory birds in sensitive habitats.</p> <p>Chapter 4.14 also provides additional references for the requested subjects.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		surveys along the Stoughton Alternative were conducted for the state-threatened Blanding's turtle. This survey was performed because the NHESP database indicated the presence of Blanding's turtles in the vicinity of the existing railroad bed."	
L-054.05	United States Department of the Interior	Page 4.15-23: The DEIS states that based on the "2001 rare species studies," suitable habitat was found for several species, including the Hessel's hairstreak and the water-willow stem borer. These studies, however, are 10 years old, and "suitable habitat" may no longer be available. We suggest that the FEIS reference more recent scientific studies or develop plans to conduct surveys to assess the habitat for those species, and provide appropriate mitigation actions if necessary.	As described in Chapter 4.15, NHESP has determined that such studies were not required at this stage of project development.
L-054.06	United States Department of the Interior	Direct wetland impacts of the proposed alternatives range between 10 and 22 acres. The DEIS states that, based upon regulatory requirements, these impacts would be mitigated at a 1:1, 2:1, or 3:1 ratio, depending upon the habitat type impacted. The ACOE's New England District Compensatory Regulation Guidance (Guidance) states that in most cases, it will be necessary to compensate for temporary and secondary impacts to prevent a net loss in aquatic resource functions. Table 2 of the Guidance, Recommended Compensatory Mitigation for Temporary and/or Secondary Impacts, includes secondary impacts that the Department would like to see included in a mitigation plan, such as: clearing of upland forest and/or scrub-shrub vegetation within 100' of the stream bank or outermost channel of braided stream; permanent conversion of forested wetlands to other cover types; removal of forested wetland cover for a new corridor; and removal of the forested cover of vernal pool buffer (w/in 250' of pool) when the percentage of disturbance exceeds 25 percent of the total VP buffer area. Mitigation to aquatic resources should include appropriate upland buffers.	See Chapter 4.16.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.07	United States Department of the Interior	<p>The Department recommends that the Applicant provide more site-specific information and that the FEIS more specifically identify impacts to aquatic resources and wildlife. This information and analysis are important to assess the impacts, and will aid in avoiding, minimizing and compensating for them. Please contact Maria Tur, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New England Field Office, 70 Commercial Street, Suite 300, Concord, NH 03301; phone: (603) 223-2541 for additional information.</p>	Chapter 4.14 provides site-specific impacts on fisheries.
L-054.08	United States Department of the Interior	<p>National Park Service</p> <p>New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park</p> <p>New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (Park) is located in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The South Coast Rail project seeks to connect this city via train with Boston. As the proposed project holds several potential major benefits for the national park (as follows), the Park strongly supports its implementation.</p> <p>It would be a huge economic boon to the area. Businesses and residents would relocate to New Bedford and as a result the city's tax base would grow significantly. The City is a legislated partner in a park that is by design a partnership park, and success is mutually interdependent. With that increased tax base would come more funding for tourism initiatives, historic preservation projects, and educational programs in which the Park and the City could collaborate, thus better ensuring adequate stewardship of our cultural resources as well as the development and maintenance of infrastructure and services that provide for a high quality visitor experience.</p>	Comment noted



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.09	United States Department of the Interior	It would increase park visitation. According to the Park's 2010 comprehensive visitor survey, a surprisingly low percentage of the Park's visitation is from the Boston area, given that this is one of the major metropolitan centers in the United States and is within 60 miles of the park. Although a car trip without traffic is theoretically only one hour, with traffic -- which is common -- the time can escalate up to two to two-and-a-half hours. In providing a convenient option around these delays, the proposed rail would open up a new audience that could connect with the park's history and significance.	Comment noted
L-054.10	United States Department of the Interior	It would make park-related travel cleaner, safer, easier and more efficient. Although the Park does have employees that commute from the Boston area, for others the commute is a deterrent to applying for jobs. The proposed rail would alleviate that, opening up a new pool of recruits for the Park. It would also make the periodic business travel by Park staff to the NPS Regional Office and other parks in Boston quicker, less costly, and more environmentally friendly.	Comment noted
L-054.11	United States Department of the Interior	Beyond these general benefits that would be incurred from the project as a whole, the Park strongly endorses the electric rail option over diesel. New Bedford has been positioning itself as a leader in the development of alternative energy, from the manufacturing of photovoltaic cells to the assembly of offshore wind apparatus, and this would be very much in keeping with that direction. The National Park Service also strives to be a leader in environmental practices, and should be forward thinking in terms of the environmental impact our children will have to bear and choose the greener option. For more information about the Park, please contact Jennifer Nersesian, Superintendent, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, 33 William Street, New Bedford, MA 02740	Comment noted

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.12	United States Department of the Interior	<p>The DEIS correctly identifies the need to coordinate with the NPS regarding the status of the Taunton River as a National Wild and Scenic River. Each of the rail alternatives involves the Fall River Secondary line which parallels the Taunton River terminating in potential new rail stations in Fall River.</p> <p>Some of the particular areas of highest concern and potential impact to resources of interest to the Wild and Scenic River include: water quality impacts from construction and stormwater runoff; rail line crossings of the Taunton and tributaries; the selection and siting of a layover facility; design and construction of the major transportation hub envisioned for North Fall River (Fall River Depot).</p> <p>The proposed route crosses through or close to many significant natural and cultural landscape features identified during the Wild and Scenic River Study, including the Hockomock Swamp, Peace Haven site, and many others. Significant coordination will need to occur to ensure that impacts to these resources are fully understood, minimized or eliminated or mitigated.</p>	<p>The Army Corps continues coordination with Federal Cooperating Agencies, including the National Park Service, as well as other stakeholders.</p>
L-054.13	United States Department of the Interior	<p>The selection and design of a Fall River layover site is of particular concern, as all three currently identified sites are riverfront, although the Weaver's Cove East is at least separated from the riverfront by the existing tracks. In reviewing the DEIS, information about potential layover sites beyond the three identified sites or whether there might be other possible layover sites with less potential impact to the Taunton riverfront area could not be found.</p>	<p>Information on the layover facility site selection process is provided in Chapter 3, Site Selection, of the Layover Facility Site Selection Technical Report (FEIS/FEIR Appendix 3.2-E) . As described in Chapter 4.18, the Weaver's Cove East Layover Facility would not impact the Taunton River shoreline. No other sites are under consideration.</p> <p>The Layover Facility Alternatives Analysis (DEIS/DEIR Appendix 3.2-E) summarizes the sites that were considered during the preliminary evaluation.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.14	United States Department of the Interior	The major Fall River Depot station could be a beneficial feature drawing people to the downtown waterfront area, and, as preliminarily discussed in the DEIS, should include waterfront pedestrian and bike access amenities, and should link and enhance a vibrant urban waterfront for the City of Fall River. Please contact Jamie Fosburgh, New England Team Leader Northeast Region Rivers Program, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109 for more information.	Comment noted
L-054.15	United States Department of the Interior	<p>Construction activities associated with track upgrades for a commuter rail to New Bedford will have noise impacts on the National Natural Landmark (NNL) Acushnet Cedar Swamp. The existing freight rail tracks are immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the NNL. Scheduling any construction near the NNL during the fall or early winter would minimize noise impacts during critical wildlife breeding season during the spring and early summer.</p> <p>There will likely be additional noise impacts from increased train traffic by the NNL if commuter rail service is initiated to New Bedford. We would be interested in whether there are ways to reduce train noise levels, particularly during critical breeding seasons in the spring and early summer.</p>	Noise impacts in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp are addressed in Chapter 4.14, page 4.14-83. MassDOT has extended the breeding season construction restrictions (April through June) to the Acushnet Cedar Swamp.
L-054.16	United States Department of the Interior	It is concluded on page 4.14-73 of the DEIS that reconstructing the section of track adjacent to the Acushnet Cedar Swamp for commuter rail service will not create any additional barrier to wildlife movement. However, construction activities have potential to temporarily impede wildlife movement. Scheduling any construction near the NNL outside known peak wildlife movement periods would minimize any barrier effects. Of greater concern, is the potential permanent impact on wildlife movement due to the increased train traffic. This should be assessed.	Chapter 4.14 discusses the barrier effects to wildlife movement in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp. The evaluation found that the existing railroad berm does not bisect an area of important wildlife habitat, and a detailed assessment of wildlife movement across the railroad berm is not warranted.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-054.17	United States Department of the Interior	<p>It is stated in the DEIS that the proposed Church St. Site Layover Facility, which is separated by Route 140 from the Acushnet Cedar Swamp, will have no impact on the swamp. It is unclear from the DEIS whether there is any hydrologic connection between Acushnet Cedar Swamp (NB-22) and the small section of wetland (NB-23.1) located between the proposed layover facility site and Route 140. Given the potential for increased run-off, potentially containing pollutants, an assessment of this is recommended. For additional information regarding the Acushnet Cedar Swamp, please contact Deb DiQuinzio, National Natural Landmarks Program, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109.</p>	<p>The Church Street layover facility site has been dismissed from further evaluation; an analysis of any hydrologic connections near this site is not necessary.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.01	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The DEIS provides an excellent analysis of the potential for environmental effects from growth that may be induced by the build alternatives. The approach is one of the best that we have seen in our review of Environmental Impact Statements, and may serve as a model for future transportation projects. The DEIS makes a compelling case that smart growth development of the South Coast region is better for the environment than "business as usual," regardless of the transit improvements ultimately implemented. One concern we have, however, is whether MassDOT can ensure that future development will follow a smart growth pattern since it will take concerted commitments by state and local governments as well as the private sector to make this happen. We commend MassDOT for the significant investments it has made to date in developing the 2009 South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan and providing technical assistance to communities in the South Coast region. We recognize that Chapter 7 of the Corridor Plan addresses implementation, as does the DEIS (page 5-27), but both in a relatively general manner. The magnitude of environmental impacts from induced growth will depend on the extent to which smart growth is achieved, so it is important to understand the actions that the Commonwealth commits to undertake.</p> <p>We recommend that the FEIS describe firm, detailed commitments that the Commonwealth is prepared to make to support a smart growth future for the region. For example, one of the assumptions made in creating the smart growth scenario is that "infrastructure constraints will be overcome within reason" and that the Commonwealth will help "support investments in infrastructure to realize more compact development." (DEIS page 5- 1 2) Adequate water and sewer infrastructure will be important to successfully implement compact development in some communities. However, since the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) no longer allocates points for wastewater projects based on a community's</p>	<p>See Section 5.5 for a description of the implementation support and monitoring committed to by MassDOT. Changing the water/sewer policies of DEP is not within the control of MassDOT or USACE, and thus would not be a practicable mitigation measure for the South Coast Rail Project. The Priority Preservation Areas were considered in developing the mitigation necessary for compliance with specific regulatory programs.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Commonwealth Capital (smart growth) score, it does not appear as if wastewater infrastructure funding is currently being targeted at projects in communities committed to smart growth. As a means to address this particular barrier to smart growth, the FEIS could describe whether the Commonwealth (DEP) would change its priority ranking process for the State Revolving Fund in order to support smart growth in the South Coast region (or elsewhere). This is just one example of the kinds of investments and commitments the Commonwealth could make to support compact, smart growth development in the area to be affected by the project. Also, the FEIS should address the extent to which the Commonwealth will commit resources to protecting the Priority Preservation Areas, in addition to establishing a regional transfer of development rights program. Without these kinds of investments in both development and conservation, future growth is more likely to follow Scenario 1 (business as usual), and the region will not reap the environmental benefits of smart growth that are described for Scenario 2 in this DEIS.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.02	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Page 5-13. As we noted when we reviewed the Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Technical Report, we do not understand why Scenario 2 includes some No-Build growth, but Scenario 1 does not, at least as described in the DEIS. Confusingly, in the Indirect Effects section on page 5-23 both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 are described as including baseline plus induced growth. It is not clear which statement is accurate. If, in fact, one scenario includes baseline growth but the other does not, this makes it difficult to compare the two scenarios. This difficulty is illustrated in a comparison of Table 5-2 with Figures 5-9 through 5-11, which do appear to include No- Build growth in both scenarios. For example, under Scenario 2 for the Stoughton alternative, Table 5-2 shows that New Bedford will lose 567 fewer households than No-Build. Since the No- Build projection for New Bedford is that it will lose 1,283 households, this implies that under Scenario 2 New Bedford will lose a total of 716 households (1,283 minus 567). Yet Figure 5-10 (Scenario 2: Stoughton Alternative, Total Growth) indicates that New Bedford will lose 607 households, not 716. We recommend that both scenarios treat No-Build growth in the same manner throughout the document, and discrepancies such as these be reconciled and corrected. If the differences between scenarios (in terms of whether they include No-Build growth) affect the environmental impacts analyses, these will need to be corrected also so that fair comparisons can be made.</p>	<p>The narrative of Chapter 5 has been revised to clarify the updated information.</p>
L-068.03	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Page 5-15. Table 5-2 provides estimates of the expected growth in households for each of the alternatives, including growth in four Rhode Island communities (Tiverton, Portsmouth, Bristol, and Warren) that may be affected by the project. We note, however, that the Rhode Island household growth is not depicted in Figures 5-3 through 5-11 and we recommend that this growth be shown, along with growth in the Massachusetts communities. For Figures 5-6 through 5-11, information on No-Build growth should be available from Rhode Island's Office of Statewide Planning.</p>	<p>Figures 5-4 through 5-7 of the FEIS/FEIR provide the housing unit growth information for the No-Build Alternative and the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives for each South Coast community as well as the four potentially affected Rhode Island communities.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.04	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-17. Assumptions for Future Growth Scenario. We had recommended during agency meetings that the analysis of potential environmental impacts that could be attributed to induced growth include stormwater runoff. Runoff from development is a significant contributor to poor water quality in southeastern Massachusetts and elsewhere, and we continue to believe that an estimate of potential impacts from induced development should be made. One approach would be to estimate the amount of impervious surface that will be created by induced development, and use hydrologic data to calculate the annual runoff from these impervious surfaces. We recognize that some of this runoff will be directed to stormwater treatment systems or otherwise absorbed before it reaches waterways, but having an estimate of the maximum potential for stormwater contamination would be useful in the comparison among alternatives.	Stormwater runoff from induced growth would be subject to NPDES permit regulatory requirements associated with each specific development. It is not possible to accurately estimate the environmental impacts or maximum potential for stormwater contamination from induced growth for each alternative.
L-068.05	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-18, first bullet. Here and elsewhere in Chapter 5 we recommend that it be made clear when only direct impacts to wetlands are being discussed, and not the full suite of direct, indirect/secondary, and cumulative impacts. For example, at a minimum we recommend that this first sentence read: "Residential housing development typically results in minor direct impacts to wetlands because of local, state, and federal legal protections."	Chapter 4.16 describes the Stoughton Alternative's potential direct and secondary impacts to aquatic resources. Cumulative effects to water resources are described in Chapter 5.
L-068.06	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-20, Table 5-4. Is there a typographical error in the ""Loss of Forest Land " category? As shown, the "high" smart growth scenario results in a greater loss of farmland than the "low" scenario, which doesn't match what is described in the text.	The number in the Scenario 2 high scenario for farmland impacts in Table 5-4 of the DEIS/DEIR was an error. The correct number is 0.091 acres per household, as indicated in Table 5.2-2 of the FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.07	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-23, second paragraph. We recommend either deleting the last sentence ("Thus, certain regulated resources experience improvements, rather than degradations, over time,") or providing a more complete description. Depending on the kind of wetlands mitigation provided, it can be a long time before mitigation replaces lost values and sometimes mitigation is not successful, In other words, successful wetland mitigation (especially wetland creation) is more complex than this last sentence implies.	The section in question has been clarified to better explain why resources can experience improvements over time, while acknowledging the time needed for establishing wetlands.
L-068.08	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-24, Table 5-5. We note that although the build scenarios (Scenario 1 and 2) reduce the loss of population (households) from Fall River and New Bedford as compared with No-Build, they do not stem the loss completely. Even the smart growth scenario (Scenario 2) still results in the loss of several hundred households from each city.	Thank you for your comment.
L-068.09	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-35, Table 5-11. Although the text indicates that the analysis does not include indirect impacts to wetlands, this should be made even clearer in the table. For example, the title of Table 5-1 1 would read "Direct Wetland Impacts (Acres of Loss)" instead of simply "Wetland Impacts (Acres of Loss)".	The table (Table 5.3-6 in the FEIS/FEIR) has been revised as suggested by the comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.10	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Pages 5-42 to 5-43. There is an error in Table 5- 15. We believe that the VMT projections for Scenario 2 are incorrect, and should be replaced with projections developed by VHB on 12/11/09. Specifically, under Scenario 2 in Table 5-15, the VMT increase for Attleboro should be 2,829,380, for Stoughton the increment should be 2,826,264, and for Rapid Bus it should be 3,147,190. These revised estimates were developed by VHB on 12/11 /09 in response to EPA's comments on the Secondary and Cumulative Impacts Technical Report. We commented that the VMT reduction factor (from 43 VMT/household/day to 26 VMT/household/day) for Scenario 2 should only be applied to those households living in smart growth areas (PDAs), and not to those living outside PDAs. VHB subsequently revised the estimates, and it is these revised numbers that should be presented in Table 5-15.	The table has been updated for the FEIS/FEIR.
L-068.11	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-44. Section 5.3.2.9. Economic Effects, Scenario 1. There appears to be a typographical error in the second sentence. The sentence states that wetland losses are evaluated below, but this section is on economic effects.	The error has been corrected in Section 5.3.4.9 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-068.12	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 5-67, Table 5-23. There appear to be typographical errors in the table, since the text indicates that the changes associated with Scenario 2 (in terms of incremental and percent change land conversion) are negative (meaning less land will be developed), not positive, but the table shows the opposite.	Table 5.4-2 of the FEIS/FEEIR presents the land use changes to clearly indicate incremental changes that would result from the Build Alternatives in comparison to the No-Build Alternative.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.13	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	The Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis conducted by the Corps for the South Coast Rail DEIS was guided by the requirements of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Environmental Justice Policy, Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Order 5610.2 Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations. These policies direct agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their activities on minority and low-income communities.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.14	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act (December 1997) provides 6 guiding principles including 1) considering the composition of the affected area to determine whether minority populations, low-income populations, or Indian tribes are present in the area affected by the proposed action, 2) considering relevant public health data and industry data concerning the potential for multiple or cumulative exposure to human health or environmental hazards in the affected population, to the extent such information is reasonably available, 3) recognizing the interrelated cultural, social, occupational, historical, or economic factors that may amplify the natural and physical environmental effects of the proposed agency action, 4) developing effective public participation strategies, 5) assuring meaningful community representation in the process, and 6) seeking tribal representation in the process in a manner that is consistent with the government-to-government relationship between the United States and tribal governments.</p> <p>In addition, in the ENF, the Secretary of EOEEA identified several environmental justice requirements for the DEIR including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-defining and mapping EJ populations in project area,</li> <li>-describing tangible benefits to EJ communities,</li> <li>- identifying potential disproportionate impacts on EJ communities and any proposed mitigation, and;</li> <li>- presenting strategies to enhance public participation in the environmental review process.</li> </ul> <p>EPA believes that the DEIS meets the requirements of these guidance documents, and that the analysis appropriately evaluates the potential for disproportionate adverse impacts to environmental justice populations (as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts EJ policy) - specifically evaluating adverse impacts due to land acquisition (neighborhood disruption/fragmentation, residential displacements, and business/job displacements), increases in</p>	<p>Chapter 4.4 provides updated noise and vibration impacts on Environmental Justice communities. MassDOT will involve Environmental Justice communities in developing noise mitigation measures during the design phase of the project. The owners of properties that would be affected by noise above the severe noise impact level and who may be eligible for noise mitigation will be consulted to identify preferred mitigation measures. Proposed noise and vibration mitigation measures are described in Chapters 4.6 and 4.7.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		noise levels and air pollution and compares these impacts to non-environmental justice neighborhoods. Impacts to EJ populations are expected to be minimal in all of these areas except for noise.	
L-068.15	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The analysis shows that at a regional level, moderate and severe noise impacts would not be predominately borne by residents of EJ neighborhoods in any of the alternatives. However, at the community level, it shows that in all the rail alternatives, the noise impacts in Fall River would be predominately borne by EJ communities. In addition, the affected community level analysis shows EJ communities in some of the study area municipalities would be disproportionately affected by noise impacts relative to non-EJ communities in these municipalities (i.e., Canton, Taunton, and Stoughton). However, the DEIS notes that severe impacts will be mitigated and a noise mitigation plan will be developed. Two types of noise mitigation measures will be considered for rail noise abatement: noise barriers and building noise insulation. EPA recommends that the impacted communities be involved with the development of the noise mitigation plan and have an opportunity to participate in decisions regarding the mitigation plans for their neighborhoods. It is not clear whether the mitigation plans will be enforceable. The FEIS should describe how these plans will be enforced and how they plan to address any unforeseen impacts to these communities.</p>	<p>MassDOT will involve Environmental Justice communities in developing noise mitigation measures during the design phase of the project. The owners of properties that would be affected by noise above the severe noise impact level and who may be eligible for noise mitigation will be consulted to identify preferred mitigation measures. Chapter 4.6 explains the implementation of noise mitigation per MBTA policy. There is no likelihood of unforeseen impacts as the factors involved in determining noise impacts are well understood and predictable with the standardized FTA methodologies.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.16	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental justice is not only about identifying and addressing adverse impacts of a project on communities but also ensuring that affected communities have access to the benefits of a project. Possible benefits of this project described in the DEIS include increased property values and improved access to jobs, colleges, hospitals, and Boston, as well as the potential for transit-oriented development in the vicinity of the new stations. While all of the alternatives will benefit EJ populations, the amount of benefit will vary depending on the alternative and community. For example, the analysis states that the Attleboro and Stoughton Alternatives would provide the greatest overall benefits to EJ populations; and the rapid bus alternative would provide fewer benefits when compared to rail but would also result in the least overall adverse impacts to EJ populations (primarily from noise).	Thank you for your comment.
L-068.17	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	The DEIS also notes that some of the benefits may come with unintentional consequences. For example, increased property values may have an adverse impact to EJ populations if it results in gentrification. The FEIS should discuss approaches for minimizing gentrification and loss of community cohesion and adoption of these approaches (e.g. affordable housing options) should be an integral part of planning discussions for the project.	USACE or the Commonwealth cannot dictate any specific initiatives to offset gentrification that are legally within the jurisdiction of the municipalities. As discussed in Section 5.5.2, the Commonwealth will provide incentives to communities to implement smart growth development strategies and will monitor certain social equity performance metrics to measure adverse effects. The project is not expected to result in a loss of community cohesion in Environmental Justice neighborhoods. The City of Fall River has several housing programs in place to assist low- and moderate-income households with home purchase and rent.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.18	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	In terms of selecting the preferred alternative, EPA recommends that the Corps/MassDOT follow the CEQ's Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act (December 1997 ) which states "that when the agency has identified a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes from either the proposed action or alternatives, the distribution as well as the magnitude of the disproportionate impacts in these communities should be a factor in determining the environmentally preferable alternative. In weighing this factor, the agency should consider the views it has received from the affected communities, and the magnitude of environmental impacts associated with alternatives that have a less disproportionate and adverse effect on low-income populations, minority populations, or Indian tribes." In this case, all of the alternatives under consideration provide benefits to EJ populations and the question that should be addressed by the Corps/MassDOT is whether identified adverse impacts can be adequately addressed.	Environmental justice impacts were a consideration in the evaluation of the alternatives.
L-068.19	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	The DEIS outlines an extensive stakeholder involvement process to date including project flyer distribution to EJ neighborhoods, translation of materials, availability of interpreters at public meetings, use of ethnic newspapers, and community workshops in impacted EJ communities. EPA recommends that this public outreach strategy be continued as the project moves forward. Public participation will become even more critical as the project moves from planning to implementation/construction. Outreach should especially be targeted to those communities who will be disproportionately impacted by noise.	The increases in noise levels would not disproportionately affect Environmental Justice communities. Chapter 4.4 describes the outreach efforts to Environmental Justice communities, including planned consultation with building owners that may be adversely affected by increases in noise.
L-068.20	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	EPA also supports the continued consultation with Native American tribes to determine if any of the alternatives would have an adverse effect on undocumented cultural resources.	Consultation has continued, as documented in Chapter 4.8.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.21	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Based on information presented in the DEIS (see DEIS Table 4.17-30), the Stoughton Electric/Diesel alternative set appears to have the least potential to impact drinking water quality, especially with regard to stormwater discharges to water bodies, Interim Wellhead Protection Areas, and Zone IIs.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.22	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Section 4.17 of the DEIS (Water Resources) adequately assesses most potential environmental impacts to affected reservoirs and wellfields, pollutant fate and transport, mitigation practices for spill containment and prevention from the rail alternatives, and provides an exhaustive overview of existing regulations and permit authorities for water resources in the affected towns. We note, however, that the discussion of potential impacts from the Rapid Bus Alternative is incomplete. Apart from cursorily mentioning salt as a stormwater pollutant from roads, impacts from the use of winter deicing chemicals for the Rapid Bus Alternative on existing highways, bus terminals, impervious surfaces and proposed lane additions in Raynham, Bridgewater and Brockton are given scant attention in the DEIS. We recommend that more discussion and data, including existing sodium/chloride concentrations in stormwater, surface water and ground water in affected Zone IIs, be provided for the Rapid Bus Alternative. Table 4.17-27 of the DEIS summarizes the wells, water systems, and Zone II stormwater discharges for the Rapid Bus Alternative. It would be helpful if the FEIS included the following information to better understand the potential magnitude of impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the existing sodium/chloride concentrations in water supplies, reservoir tributaries, and stormwater discharges;</li> <li>- what Best Management Practices (BMPs) are proposed for salt application optimization and reduction,</li> <li>- how salt is stored near Zone II areas;</li> <li>- whether there are highly sensitive zones that require more attention; and</li> <li>- if sodium chloride concentrations are increasing over time, and, if so, what remedies are proposed for reductions;</li> <li>-the current concentrations of stormwater constituents (including sodium and chloride) in public water supplies with Zone Is and 11s penetrated by the Rapid Bus road alternative. These data are available from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and affected drinking water systems as a result of routine Safe Drinking Water Act monitoring for inorganics, metals and</li> </ul>	The Rapid Bus Alternative has been dismissed from further consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		organics. If such concentrations are approaching or exceed federal/state Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), the DEIS should explain the remedies and BMPs proposed to reduce concentrations. EPA believes that understanding existing water quality conditions prior to project construction is necessary to better assess any future environmental impacts.	
L-068.23	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Stormwater Permitting Requirements. The DEIS correctly identifies the requirement for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System(NPDES) permit for stormwater associated with construction activities associated with any of the Build Alternatives. EPA has issued the NPDES General Permit for Stoma Water Discharges From Construction Activities ("Construction General Permit" or "CGP"), which authorizes stormwater discharges that meet the permit's eligibility criteria. Where stormwater discharges are proposed into Outstanding Resource Waters ("ORW"), operators must file a WM 08B Notice of Intent with MassDEP prior to seeking CGP authorization from EPA.</p> <p>For all Rail Alternatives, the DEIS indicates that maintenance and cleaning functions will be performed at proposed layover facilities. Pursuant to 40 CFR 122.26(b)(14), facilities engaging in such activities are considered to be engaging in an industrial activity and require an NPDES permit for stormwater discharges from such facilities. EPA has issued the Multi-Sector General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities ("MSGP"), which authorizes stormwater discharges that meet the permit's eligibility criteria. As with the CGP, operators must file a WM 08B Notice of Intent with MADEP prior to seeking MSGP authorization from EPA where discharges are proposed to an ORW.</p>	Permitting requirements are addressed in Chapter 4.17.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.24	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Both the CGP and MSGP include specific provisions related to the eligibility and control of discharges to impaired water bodies, with or without established Total Maximum Daily Loads ("TMDLs"). Though the DEIS refers to MADEP's 2006 Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters to obtain the impairment status of relevant water bodies, the proponent is reminded that it must reference the most current list (at this time, 2010) of waters available at the time of permitting. If EPA or MADEP determines that certain proposed discharges are not eligible for coverage under the CGP or MSGP, the proponent must obtain an individual NPDES permit for such discharges.	The Massachusetts Year 2010 Integrated List of Waters Final Listing of the Condition of Massachusetts' Waters Pursuant to Sections 305(b), 314 and 303(d) of the Clean Water Act was reviewed for changes relevant to the South Coast Rail project. Since 2006, Final Pathogen TMDLs have been approved by EPA for the Buzzards Bay Watershed (March 2009 - CN 251.1) and the Taunton River Watershed (June 2011 - CN 252.0). The Buzzards Bay Watershed TMDL covers the New Bedford Inner Harbor. The Taunton River Watershed TMDL covers the Assonet River and the Taunton River. One waterbody, Forge Pond in Canton, was listed under Category 3 (No Uses Assessed) in 2006. In the 2010 Integrated List of Waters, the Pond is identified as Category 5 (TMDL Required), with turbidity listed as the cause of the impairment. None of the other waterbodies changed categories or had additional impairments listed since the 2006 List was released.
L-068.25	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	EPA believes the air quality analysis in the DEIS is reasonable and thorough. The inputs and methodology in the analysis are consistent with other air quality analyses prepared for transportation projects in Eastern Massachusetts. The appropriate MOBILE6 emission factor model and CAL3QHC microscale program were used to prepare the regional and microscale air quality analyses. In general, we concur with the air quality summary and conclusions presented in the DEIS. When compared to the No Build scenario, the analysis concludes that none of the build alternatives will result in an increase of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or nitrogen oxides (NOx)[ precursors to ozone], in fact, a reduction of VOC and NOx for the build alternatives are projected in future years. In addition, the microscale analysis demonstrates that the build alternatives will not result in violation of the one-hour or eight-hour national ambient air quality standard for carbon monoxide.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.26	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Chapter 2 of the OEIS (page 2-6), incorrectly identifies the eight-hour ozone classification for Eastern Massachusetts as "severe". The Boston-Lawrence-Worcester (E. Mass), MA eight-hour ozone nonattainment area consisting of ten counties in eastern Massachusetts (Barnstable County, Bristol County, Dukes County, Essex County, Middlesex County, Nantucket County, Norfolk County, Plymouth County, Suffolk County, and Worcester County) is classified as moderate. See 40 CFR 81.322. This classification should be corrected in the FEIS.	The classification of the area has been corrected.
L-068.27	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	We encourage MassDOT to commit to the construction air quality impact mitigation measures, and emission reduction measures at rail layover facilities which are identified in Section 7.4.6 (pages 7-15 and 7-16) of the DEIS. These commitments should be included in the Corps FEIS and Record of Decision for the project.	Mitigation measures for construction-related air quality impacts are provided in Chapter 7. If a diesel alternative is selected, the use of plug-ins and electric block heaters at rail layover facilities would be required.
L-068.28	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	We note that the Attleboro diesel locomotive alternative will require all new rolling stock, (purchase of new train sets consisting of locomotive engine, coaches and cab), while both the Stoughton and Whittenton diesel locomotive alternatives would extend existing services and may be able to utilize a number of existing train sets. As the construction period for diesel train alternatives range from four to seven years, new locomotive engine purchases would likely be built to Tier 4 emissions standards that apply to newly-built locomotives starting in year 2015. EPA also encourages, wherever possible, implementation of an accelerated timeline for required locomotive rebuilding, thereby providing emission controls earlier than currently required. When rebuilding locomotive engines, EPA encourages re-manufacture to the cleanest emission control practicable at the time.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.29	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>DEIS Scoring System</p> <p>Background</p> <p>The DEIS describes a scoring process (DEIS page 3-121) that was developed to demonstrate the relative performance of the alternatives with respect to specific criteria. The scoring system was applied to determine how well the alternatives met the project purpose, whether they are practicable, and whether they result in positive (beneficial) air quality impacts. The scoring system was also used to compare a range of environmental impacts across alternatives, and ultimately to provide an assessment of the overall performance of each alternative.</p>	<p>The letter grade scoring system has been eliminated, instead the actual impact analysis results are provided.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.30	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>General Comments</p> <p>The Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA require the alternatives analysis in all EISs to include the alternative of "no action" (40 CFR 1502.14(d)) to provide a benchmark to enable a comparison of the effects of alternatives (Question 3, CEQ's Forty Most Asked Questions about CEQ's NEPA Regulations). In practice, agencies typically have used the no action (also known as the no build) alternative not only to compare alternatives with respect to impacts but also to show how they perform when compared to what would occur if no action were taken. In this case, while the DEIS does include discussion of a no-action alternative (as defined on DEIS page 3-31), the scoring system relied on in the DEIS to draw comparisons and conclusions about which alternatives meet the project purpose, it omits any comparison of the alternatives to the no build condition. Instead, the DEIS scores alternatives based solely on how well they perform as compared to the best performing alternative, and assigns a letter grade (A-F) to the relative comparison score. We believe this approach in the scoring system introduces a bias to the process because it masks the fact that an alternative that performs less well than the optimum one still can achieve the purpose of the project. Using a scoring system that compares alternatives' performance to the future no-build baseline would be a more objective presentation of the comparison and would be consistent with the intent of the CEQ regulations. In addition, we believe the assignment of grades with the ultimate use being a comparison of "Counts of Grade "F" is misleading. The use of the system results, for instance, in the grade "F" for the Rapid Bus alternative under both the "VMT" and "Regional Mobility" criteria, even though the Rapid Bus alternative reduces VMTs and results in an increase in regional mobility. The assignment of a failing grade fails to recognize that all of the build alternatives reduce VMTs and increase regional mobility, albeit with the rail alternatives performing better than Rapid Bus. The subsequent tally of "failing" grades to rank alternatives further compounds this</p>	<p>Chapter 3 provides a description of the No-Build (Enhanced Bus) Alternative and the alternatives are compared to No-Build in tables throughout the document. Note that the letter grade rankings of performance used in the DEIS/DEIR have been eliminated per the suggestion of EPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>problem.</p> <p>We believe that the Corps should incorporate the no-build alternative into their comparisons of alternatives, consistent with the intent of the CEQ regulations. We also believe the Corps should eliminate the score and grade components of the criteria tables, and instead simply present, for each criterion, the performance information for each of the alternatives. This performance information is already contained in the criteria tables, so our suggestion would be simple to implement and would result in a much clearer and more relevant depiction of information related to the practicability determinations.</p>	
L-068.31	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	After carefully examining the DEIS, PN, and other information, we do not believe there is sufficient information to determine compliance with the Guidelines.	Additional information has been developed for the FEIS/FEIR, including items requested by U.S. EPA.
L-068.32	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The river, stream and wetland systems within the South Coast Rail project area provide a broad range of ecological functions for the landscape. Field work by MassDOT's consultants and visits to the project study area by Regional staff documented that, taken in total, the stream and wetland systems provide all 13 functions and values listed in the Corps Highway Methodology-Descriptive Approach. While most of these systems do not provide all 13 functions and values individually, some do. With respect to wildlife expected to be found in the project study area, a review of Tables 4.14-1, 4.14-2, and 4.14-3 shows that greater than 80% of birds, 90% of mammals, and 90% of amphibians and reptiles are wetland dependent, respectively. This information is notable and elevates both the importance of these aquatic resources as well as the significance of expected adverse impacts from the proposed project.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.33	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Figures 4.16-2a - 4.16-2q, and 4.16-3a - 4.16-8w of the DEIS provide the standard graphical summary of principal functions and values for each individual wetland area that would be impacted directly by each of the South Coast Rail alternatives. This is helpful visually for an overview of wetland functions and values along the various alternative corridors. On the other hand, the DEIS contains neither a detailed narrative explanation of these ecological functions and values nor an explanation of how these wetland specific ecological functions contribute to the functioning of the broader aquatic systems of which they are a part (i.e., a watershed perspective). Such explanations would provide a more thorough understanding of the importance of these aquatic resources as well as the significance of expected adverse impacts from the proposed project. The FEIS should contain these explanations.</p>	<p>As documented in Chapter 4.16, there are 378 wetlands adjacent to the right-of-way. A summary of the direct impacts to vegetated wetlands by watershed is also provided. The analysis provided an assessment of functions and values for each wetland. Providing a detailed narrative explanation of the ecological functions and values of each of these wetlands, and their broader relationships within the Neponset, Taunton, Buzzards Bay, and Mount Hope Bay watersheds is beyond the scope of this document and is not required for the evaluation of project impacts.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.34	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The Corps has defined the basic project purpose in this case as follows: "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts." DEIS at 1-1. The Region participated with the Corps in developing this definition of basic project purpose, and we agree that it represents an appropriate characterization of the project purpose to ensure that a reasonable range of alternatives is examined.</p> <p>The Corps characterized the "basic" project purpose as being relevant only to whether a project is water dependent or not. Id. The Corps then identified an "overall" project purpose, to be used to evaluate whether there are less environmentally damaging practicable alternatives, as: "'to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts to enhance regional mobility." Id. at 1-2. The Region did not learn of the Corps' decision to develop a separate "overall" project purpose until we received the DEIS, and we do not agree with the Corps' establishment of a different project purpose definition to be used in the alternatives analysis. The Region and the Corps' New England District's longstanding interpretation and practice has been to define the "basic" project purpose both for determining whether a project is water dependent and for determining whether alternatives are practicable ( in light of the basic project purpose).</p> <p>The Corps relies on the following language in 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a)(2) to support its approach: "An alternative is practicable if it is available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purposes." (emphasis added). However, the very next sentence states that " ...an area not presently owned by the applicant which could be reasonably be obtained, managed, or utilized in order to fulfill the basic purpose of the proposed activity may be considered." (emphasis added). Clearly the terms "overall" and "basic" are intended to be used interchangeably. Indeed,</p>	<p>The 404(b)(1) Guidelines mention basic project purpose solely in the context of water dependency and special aquatic sites. When a project does not require siting within a special aquatic site (which includes wetlands) to meet its basic purpose (in this case, public transportation) practicable alternatives that would not involve a discharge into waters of the U.S. are presumed to exist unless demonstrated otherwise (through an alternatives analysis). However, the Overall Project Purpose applies to all waters of the United States and is apropos to the determination of whether there are less environmentally damaging practicable alternatives to that which is proposed.</p> <p>The Corps New England District's development of both a basic project purpose and an overall project purpose is consistent with the Corps' "Standard Operating Procedures for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program," issued by the Corps' Director of Civil Works on July 1, 2009, and effective nationwide. The SOP states, "Defining the basic project purpose enables the Corps to determine if the activity is water dependent (see 40 CFR 230.10(a)(3)). The overall project purpose is used to identify and evaluate practicable alternatives (see 40 CFR 230.10(a)(2)). Decision documents should clearly define the basic and overall project purpose for each activity requiring a section 404 permit." In fact, the first version of the SOP was originally released on October 15, 1999, and the section concerning project purpose in the updated version is little changed from the original. The New England District is therefore following long-standing nationwide practice within the Regulatory Program for defining the basic vs. overall project purpose.</p> <p>EPA is correct that the District has relied on basic project purpose in the past in determining practicable alternatives, in particular, citing language in the District's Highway Methodology document. EPA also cites the 1989 Corps Hartz Mountain permit elevation decision, which also refers to basic project purpose. However, the Corps Plantation Landing permit elevation decision, issued the same year as</p>

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		<p>the preamble to the Guidelines states, in the discussion of alternatives (as distinguished from the water dependency discussion): "We consider it implicit that, to be practicable, an alternative must be capable of achieving the basic purpose of the proposed activity." Guidelines Preamble, "Alternatives," 45 Fed. Reg. 85335, 85339 (December 24, 1980).</p> <p>The 1993 Highway Methodology Workbook, which the Region and the New England District have utilized for almost twenty years, also treats the two terms interchangeably. For example, on page 5 the Workbook states "The Corps will define this overall/basic project purpose broadly to ensure that a reasonable range of alternatives will be examined," and "'This [NEPA] 'purpose and need' differs from the Corps section 404(b)(1) Guidelines statement of 'overall/basic project purpose.'" In addition, the Workbook repeatedly displays a diagram of the permit process which refers only to the Corps' identification of the basic project purpose and makes no mention of the establishment of a separate overall project purpose. The Region's view is consistent with the Corps' guidance issued in the Hartz Mountain Development Corporation Permit Elevation, which addresses the issue of defining the basic project purpose in the context of the alternatives analysis, not water dependency:</p> <p>The Guidelines alternatives analysis must use the "basic project purpose," which cannot be defined narrowly by the applicant to preclude the existence of practicable alternatives. On the other hand, the Corps has some discretion in defining the "basic project purpose" for each Section 404 permit application in a manner which seems reasonable and equitable for that particular case.</p> <p>HQUSACE Review Findings, Hartz Mountain Permit Elevation, 1989, at 4.</p> <p>The Region's comments on the practicability of alternatives are therefore framed in terms of satisfying the basic project</p>	<p>the Hartz Mountain decision, and the Corps Twisted Oaks permit elevation decision, issued two years later in 1991, took the same approach to "basic" and "overall" project purpose as the Corps did here and as is set forth in the SOP. Moreover, notwithstanding the position espoused in the comment letter from EPA Region 1, others within EPA have taken a position consistent with that of the Corps here. As noted in a 1989 article in Wetlands authored by officials from EPA Region 9, "It is the legal opinion of EPA Region IX that the term, 'Overall Project Purposes' means the basic project purpose plus consideration of costs and technological and logistical feasibility." Thomas G. Yocom et al., Wetlands Protection Through Impact Avoidance: A Discussion of the 404(b)(1) Alternatives Analysis, 9 Wetlands 283, 289 (1989); see also Jon Schultz, The Steepest Hurdle in Obtaining a Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit: Complying With EPA's 404(b)(1) Guidelines' Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative Requirement, 24 UCLA J Envtl. L. &amp; Pol'y 235, 242 n.45 (2006). Thus, at different points in time both agencies have interpreted and applied the terms "basic" and "overall" project purpose in a manner consistent with both positions espoused by the Corps and EPA in the current permit review. Importantly for the Corps, however, the interpretation applied by the Corps here has been formalized and established as the agency's position in the SOP.</p> <p>The Corps SOP also notes: "Defining the overall project purpose is the [Corps] district's responsibility. However, the applicant's needs and the type of project being proposed should be considered. The overall project purpose should be specific enough to define the applicant's needs, but not so restrictive as to constrain the range of alternatives that must be considered under the 404(b)(1) Guidelines."</p> <p>We believe that "enhancing regional mobility" is a reasonable goal for public transportation: The applicant's view that a transportation corridor should provide links between stations along the route, and not merely to/from any given station from/to Boston, is completely</p>

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		<p>purpose. As discussed further below, however, even if the Corps' "overall" project purpose formulation were used, we do not believe it would make a difference to our analysis in this case.</p> <p>The Corps does not identify the LEDPA in the DEIS, but MassDOT does identify the Stoughton family of alternatives as its preferred corridor. DEIR at P-8. Based on the information provided in the DEIS, the Region believes that the only alternatives shown to be impracticable are the Attleboro Alternatives, for reasons discussed below. While the remaining Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus Alternatives differ in the extent to which each satisfies the basic project purpose, none has been clearly shown to be impracticable. As discussed in Section V. below, the Region believes that additional information is needed to determine which is the least environmentally damaging to the aquatic environment and, hence, the LEDPA.</p>	<p>understandable. Regional mobility is therefore a reasonable standard for devising the suite of alternatives that must be considered in reaching a LEDPA determination; we thus developed an overall project purpose that included this goal. At the same time, we did not restrict our analysis to mode (i.e., rail vs. bus), to one particular route, or to the propulsion system (i.e., diesel vs. electric), and carefully analyzed each of these in turn as to (1) whether it met the overall project purpose; (2) if so, whether it was practicable; and (3) if so, whether it was less environmentally damaging than the applicant's preferred alternative. We believe that our development of the Overall Project Purpose in this instance is totally consistent with both the letter and the intent of the 404(b)(1) Guidelines.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.35	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Before turning to an analysis of the alternatives, we would like to outline our concerns about the process used by the Corps to score the alternatives. The DEIS presents the differences among all of the various alternatives (except for the no-build alternative), by comparing their relative performances under several specific criteria. The best performing alternative under any given criterion is the baseline against which the other alternatives are compared and assigned a relative score, which is then expressed as a letter grade (A through F). While this approach provides a simple way to portray the general and relative performances of each alternative with respect to the evaluation criteria, it has no direct bearing on the question of whether any particular alternative is practicable under 40 C.F.R. § 230.10(a) or can meet the basic project purpose. We believe the approach introduces a bias to the evaluation because it obscures the fact that an alternative that performs less well than the optimum one still can achieve the purpose of the project. The approach may inform the applicant as to which build alternatives are "best" or "better" from its perspective, but it does not generate a "score" that addresses whether or not an alternative is practicable. As a result, from the standpoint of the 404 review process, it creates confusion by obscuring the determinative fact that an alternative that performs less well than the optimum one still can achieve the purpose of the project. An alternative that is "practicable" under § 230.1(a) cannot be rejected simply because it does not perform as well as other alternatives, including the preferred alternative. Therefore, in reviewing the factual information presented in the DEIS's alternatives screening discussion, the Region has considered each alternative's performance relative to whether it can meet the basic project purpose in light of costs, logistics, and existing technology, rather than whether it can perform best or better than other alternatives. Furthermore, we strongly recommend that in the FEIS, the Corps should eliminate the score and grade components of the criteria tables, and instead simply present, for each criterion, the performance information for each of the alternatives. This performance</p>	<p>The letter grade scoring system has been eliminated for the FEIS/FEIR, instead the actual impact analysis results are provided.</p> <p>EPA participated in an interagency coordinating group (ICG) convened by MassDOT during scoping (i.e., 2009-2010), and was aware of this scoring system for alternatives well in advance of the DEIS/DEIR, and to our knowledge and recollection did not express any reservations about the system prior to commenting on the DEIS/DEIR.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		information is already contained in the criteria tables, so this change would be simple to implement and would result in a much clearer and more relevant depiction of information related to the practicability determinations.	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.36	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>As noted above, in order to be practicable, an alternative must be available and capable of being done. The DEIS does not identify any issues related to the availability of the Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus Alternatives. The properties on which the alternatives would be built are all available by virtue of being either owned or obtainable by the Commonwealth.</p> <p>"Capable of being done" takes into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics. The preamble to the Guidelines provides clarification on how cost is to be considered in the determination of practicability: "Our intent is to consider those alternatives which are reasonable in terms of the overall scope/cost of the proposed project. " Guidelines Preamble, "Alternatives", 45 Fed. Reg. 85335, 85339 (December 24, 1980). The preamble to the Guidelines also states that "[i]f an alleged alternative is unreasonably expensive to the applicant, the alternative is not 'practicable.'" Id. at 85343. The EPA and Corps 1993 Memorandum to the Field (cited in footnote 2 above) emphasizes that "... it is not a particular applicant's financial standing that is the primary consideration for determining practicability, but rather characteristics of the project and what constitutes a reasonable expense for these projects that are most relevant to practicability determinations."</p> <p>The applicant's preferred alternatives -- Stoughton electric and diesel --would cost \$1.88 billion and \$1.48 billion, respectively. DEIS at 1-8. We assume, for purposes of this comment letter, that the applicant has determined that the costs associated with the Stoughton alternatives are practicable; otherwise it would not have selected Stoughton to be its preferred alternative. The Whittenton electric and diesel alternatives, at \$1.81 billion and \$1.41 billion, respectively, would be slightly less expensive. Id. The Rapid Bus alternative would be the least expensive at \$812 million. Id. Thus, none of these alternatives should be rejected as impracticable on the basis of cost. The DEIS does not identify either technological or logistical issues that would preclude</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR did not identify any of the Build Alternatives as not practicable for reasons of cost, existing technology, and logistics, with the exception of the Attleboro Alternative if modified with a 4th track.</p> <p>EPA cites the preamble to the 404(b)(1) Guidelines and asserts that "overall cost" is the basis for considering cost in the determination of practicability. However, we also note that nothing in the 404(b)(1) guidelines precludes use of a cost-benefit metric as a reasonable consideration with respect to cost in determining practicability. We concur with EPA's view that the applicant's financial standing is not an appropriate measure of what is "unreasonably expensive to the applicant"; however, in the realm of a public works project, cost per rider is an appropriate metric in determining whether the project is "unreasonably expensive." Further, there are other precedents for evaluating costs in terms of such cost-benefit ratios. For example, in an application for a proposed wind farm, the Corps' Los Angeles District used "cost per megawatt" as a basis for determining practicability in reviewing that application (No. SPL-2009-00971). In a Corps civil works project involving a recreational lake, the Huntington District used benefit: cost ratio as a factor in determining practicability. The affected EPA Regions supported the use of those metrics in those instances. In the case of this application, Corps finds no basis in either regulation or precedent for rejecting "cost per rider" as a reasonable metric of practicability. Nevertheless, it was not the predominant consideration; we also examined logistics and existing technology in or determination in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>any of these five alternatives from being considered practicable. Therefore, the key question is whether any of them would fail to satisfy the basic project purpose.</p> <p>Considering the various evaluation criteria described in chapter 3 of the DEIS, the Region concludes that all five of the alternatives would satisfy the basic project purpose, i.e., would "more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts." All of them would improve the quality of transit services over existing conditions; meet a substantial portion of ridership demand (ranging from 44% to 63%); and provide a "comparable or competitive travel time and improved reliability" compared to existing peak commuting conditions. Id. at 3-123, 3-124. In addition, while not required to satisfy the basic project purpose, all of the alternatives would provide a benefit of reduced vehicle miles traveled.</p> <p>The DEIS identifies additional "sub-criteria" related to the practicability of the alternatives, using the same scoring approach described above. These sub-criteria are the cost per rider, construction schedule, and on-time performance. None of the information presented related to these criteria demonstrates that any of the five alternatives (Stoughton, Whittenton, and Rapid Bus), would fail to meet the basic project purpose.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.37	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The DEIS states that the Rapid Bus Alternative would be the least cost-effective alternative, based on the balance of capital and maintenance costs of the service to the benefit of the service (expressed as the number of riders projected to use the system). Id. at 3-130. We have several comments about this criterion. First, the DEIS states that the cost/benefit metric, expressed as cost per rider, includes the cost of environmental mitigation. However, an environmental mitigation plan has not yet been developed, and in the Region's opinion the cost of mitigating the impacts to the aquatic environment from the rail alternatives would be substantially higher than the cost associated with mitigating the impacts to the aquatic environment from the Rapid Bus Alternative (see discussion in Section VI, below). Therefore, we believe that the cost per rider figures portrayed in Table 3.3-11 (DEIS at 3-131) are incomplete and inaccurate. We expect that including the likely mitigation costs would bring the cost per rider figures closer together. In addition, even if there is a substantial disparity in cost per rider, that does not render the Rapid Bus Alternative impracticable or unable to meet the basic project purpose. From an overall cost standpoint (which is how practicability is evaluated), it is the least expensive alternative, and it would, notwithstanding the cost per rider, meet a substantial portion of ridership demand (44%), thus "more fully meet[ing] existing and future demand for public transportation...." Furthermore, we note that the cost per rider estimate for Rapid Bus was approximately \$32 in a Cost Effectiveness Comparison distributed at an Interagency Coordinating Group meeting in 2009, as compared with the nearly \$100 estimate included in the DEIS. The FEIS should explain why the cost per rider estimate for Rapid Bus increased by over 3-fold between these two documents, as compared with the other alternatives for which the cost estimate changed little, if any.</p>	<p>Mitigation costs for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives were included in the overall cost estimate described in the FEIS/FEIR; however they were not a discriminating factor as the costs among the alternatives were similar. Information on the Rapid Bus Alternative is provided in the Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum and as discussed in Chapter 3. The Rapid Bus Alternative was eliminated from further consideration based on multiple factors, including input from the Federal Highway Administration, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives.</p> <p>The comment provides no basis for the conclusion that the cost of mitigating aquatic resource impacts from the rail alternatives would be substantially higher than those for bus. District Mitigation Guidelines set specific ratios for forested, shrub and emergent wetlands, and the proportions of each on the rail and bus alignments are comparable. And in terms of acres, the wetland impacts of bus are nearly double those of rail. Although the rail alternatives traverse high quality aquatic resources, they generally do so on existing railroad grades and thus very little new direct impact to those aquatic resources is proposed. Even in Hockomock Swamp, the vast majority of impacts are to a highly degraded stream that has overflowed its original banks and now flows along the alignment at the southern end of the swamp - technically located within the ACEC, but otherwise adjacent to highly developed and degraded sites. The majority of other impacts along the alignment are also located where wetlands have formed as a secondary result of settling of original fill materials, in areas where the grade was "cut" through existing landscapes (thereby intercepting groundwater) or otherwise including narrow slivers of wetlands in the few instances where widening or reconstruction of the ROW is necessary. We thus find that the EPA assertion that the cost of mitigating aquatic resource impacts of rail is necessarily higher than that of bus is not supported by the data.</p>



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Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.38	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>The DEIS also evaluates whether the alternatives would improve regional mobility. As discussed above, the Corps identified the "overall" project purpose to be "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts to enhance regional mobility." This is the same as the basic project purpose with the addition of the clause "to enhance regional mobility." While the Region does not agree with the Corps' distinction between "basic project purpose" and "overall project purpose" from the standpoint of the alternatives analysis, in this particular case we do not believe there is a meaningful difference between the two. That is, more fully meeting the demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston will, by definition, enhance regional mobility.</p> <p>In evaluating regional mobility, the DEIS considered both the connectivity between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, and interregional connectivity. All of the alternatives clearly enhance mobility between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston.</p> <p>The Region believes that the goal of improving interregional connectivity, similar to MassDOT's goal of supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities, is properly viewed as a desirable benefit of the project rather than a fundamental aspect of the basic project purpose (or even the "overall" project purpose as described by the Corps). In other words, the absence of improved interregional mobility would not be a proper basis for concluding that an alternative fails to meet the basic project purpose. Nonetheless, we note that all of the alternatives do improve interregional connectivity to some extent, although the rail alternatives would be much more effective in this regard than the Rapid Bus Alternative. We also note the MassDOT envisions a feeder bus service to train stations "to connect the urbanized communities in the study area to the South Coast stations." DEIS at 1-17. This feeder bus network would provide enhanced bus service from the communities</p>	<p>Regional mobility refers to mobility within the South Coast Region and thus is not synonymous with public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, which is consider inter-region.</p> <p>The performance of the Rapid bus alternative with respect to interregional connectivity was considered, but was not a deciding factor in the decision to not advance the Rapid Bus alternative to the FEIS/FEIR. Rapid bus alternative is not practicable as documented in Appendix 3.1-E and in consideration of the input provided by FHWA. The addition of feeder bus service to the Rapid Bus Alternative would not alter this conclusion.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		to the train stations to provide an alternative to driving to stations. Id. The FEIS should evaluate whether an expansion of the local bus network as an adjunct to the Rapid Bus Alternative would further enhance interregional connectivity.	
L-068.39	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>We recognize that the Rapid Bus Alternative does not perform as well as the rail alternatives for some criteria. We also believe that there may be additional steps that could be taken that would result in better performance of this alternative. We recommend that the FEIS evaluate the following issues related to the Rapid Bus Alternative:</p> <p>* Performance: We note that travel speeds for the Rapid Bus service are based on the posted speed of the adjacent travel lanes. The FEIS should discuss areas like Route 24 where the bus will operate in its own designated lane and whether the bus route can be designed to be operated safely at higher speeds to reduce overall travel times for this alternative.</p>	Information on the Rapid Bus Alternative is provided in the Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum (Appendix 3.1-E) and as discussed in Chapter 3. Efforts were undertaken to modify the Rapid Bus Alternative analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR in order to increase ridership by enabling greater travel speeds and adding stations while trying to avoid impacts on the regional transportation system and environmental impacts, including impacts on Environmental Justice communities. The Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum also discusses designated lanes and safety. The Rapid Bus Alternative, including its modified versions, was eliminated from further consideration based on multiple factors, including input from the Federal Highway Administration, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives.
L-068.40	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>* Congestion: The FEIS should describe solutions that could be implemented to address congestion that the bus service will face as it enters the mixed traffic portion of its route along the Southeast Expressway. Improvements to address congestion issues will benefit the Rapid Bus Alternative as well as the general commuting public utilizing shared portions of the proposed travel corridor.</p>	Information on the Rapid Bus Alternative is provided as requested by the Corps of Engineers. The Rapid Bus Alternative has been dismissed from further consideration, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives. The Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum discusses bus/car interaction along the Southeast Expressway.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.41	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>Ridership: Ridership on the Rapid Bus Alternative suffers due to a number of issues described in a May 2010 Central Transportation Planning Staff memo in DEIS Appendix 4.I-J (page 10). That memo reads in part, "There are five major factors contributing to why the rapid bus alternatives produces lower performance measures, than the commuter rail alternatives. These factors are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Run times are longer to South Station, with the exception of bus only versus Whittenton Diesel, in which the rail alternative is three minutes slower than the Rapid Bus Alternative.</li> <li>•The commuter rail alternatives serve several more stations</li> <li>•Lack of connectivity with the Orange Line Station</li> <li>•Transfer times between the rapid bus and the rapid transit lines are a little longer than with the commuter rail lines</li> <li>•Fewer new stations being provided in areas of proposed growth</li> <li>•Lack of intra-regional connectivity I no intermediate stations</li> </ul> <p>Together these factors produce between 52% and 65% of the daily boardings and 35% to 50% of the auto diversions that, for instance, the Stoughton Diesel rail alternatives produce."</p> <p>The FEIS should make it clear whether any one change, or combination of changes, to the Rapid Bus Alternative would result in a meaningful change in ridership. In particular, the FEIS should explore what it would take to provide a connection between the proposed Rapid Bus service and the MBTA's Orange Line and what effect additional stations in areas of proposed growth could have on ridership.</p>	<p>Information on the Rapid Bus Alternative is provided in the Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum and as discussed in Chapter 3. Efforts were undertaken to modify the Rapid Bus Alternative analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR in order to increase ridership by enabling greater travel speeds and adding stations and connections with other transit services (such as the Orange Line) while trying to avoid impacts on the regional transportation system and environmental impacts, including impacts on Environmental Justice communities. The Rapid Bus Alternative, including its modified versions, was eliminated from further consideration based on multiple factors, including input from the Federal Highway Administration, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.42	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Rapid Bus Equipment: The DEIS at Page 3-110 indicates that buses "could" feature amenities. Based upon comments made by MassDOT representatives and its consultants throughout the process leading up to the DEIS, it has been our understanding that the buses "would" be "state of the art" with comfortable seating and Wi-Fi, etc., to attract ridership and give high quality service. We believe that the FEIS should be revised to reflect previous verbal commitments by the Commonwealth to provide this level of service for the Rapid Bus.	The Rapid Bus Alternative would incorporate passenger comfort and convenience features.
L-068.43	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	EPA is persuaded, based on information in the DEIS, that the Attleboro Alternatives would fail to meet the basic project purpose due to an interlocking set of confounding performance/logistical issues which characterize this alignment alone.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration.
L-068.44	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	The Region believes that the DEIS demonstrates that the Attleboro Alternatives would not be practicable alternatives to meet the basic project purpose because they would offer very untimely service even at comparatively infrequent intervals, combined with the fact that they are predicted to compromise, rather than enhance, the existing public transportation infrastructure. Moreover, the only way to remedy these deficiencies is to construct a fourth track, which itself has serious flaws that render it impracticable, including an additional cost that would more than double the overall cost to greater than \$4 billion; a significantly longer (4-5 years vs. 10-12 years) construction schedule; lengthy and substantial disruptions to the existing Orange Line commuter services and an important inner city park that runs through environmental justice communities; and a wide-ranging, complex subsurface construction project (with all its attendant uncertainties) in the center of Boston. For all of these reasons, EPA believes it is reasonable to dismiss the Attleboro Alternatives from further consideration.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.45	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	In conclusion, the Region believes that, based on current information in the DEIS, the Stoughton, Whittenton; and Rapid Bus Alternatives are all practicable and would meet the basic project purpose. We also believe that further evaluation of issues associated with the Rapid Bus Alternative should be conducted to determine the extent to which there could be improvements in that alternative's overall performance. Finally, we agree that the Attleboro Alternatives are not practicable alternatives and need not be considered further.	The Rapid Bus Alternative, including its modified versions, was eliminated from further consideration based on multiple factors, including input from the Federal Highway Administration, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum (Appendix 3.1-E) include an evaluation of performance improvements from the project purpose and practicability perspectives, respectively.
L-068.46	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	DEIS section 4.16.3.2 describes the methodology used to evaluate direct adverse impacts and explains that "[e]ach alternative corridor was assessed for the presence of wetland resources within and adjacent to the right-of-way, and the impacts associated with them. For purposes of this evaluation, wetlands within 100 feet of the right-of-way are considered to be adjacent." In footnote 1 for Table 4.16-38 on page 4.16-56, the DEIS further explains that the 100 foot distance was measured from the centerline of each corridor. The Region believes that the 100 feet should have been measured from the edge of clearing for the corridor right-of-way for a more accurate inventory of aquatic resources and a better evaluation of adverse impacts.	All wetlands within and directly abutting the alignment right-of-way were field delineated. These field delineations identified all wetlands that would be directly impacted by the Stoughton Alternative. Additional wetlands within 100 feet of the right-of-way were identified using MassGIS data layers and were confirmed using available satellite imagery. The level of effort and detail in delineating wetlands was appropriately focused on the areas that would experience the greatest impacts. The comment does not explain why evaluating wetlands 100 feet from the edge of clearing vs. the centerline is necessary to understand the impacts of the alternatives for purposes of the EIS/EIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.47	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>With respect to vernal pools, on page 4.14-16, the DEIS states that, "[p]otential vernal pools do not receive protection under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act Regulations, or under any other state or federal wetlands protection laws" (emphasis added). This statement is inaccurate, as pools that do not meet state certification criteria may still be subject to federal jurisdiction and regulated under the CWA. Also, it appears that for the purposes of the alternatives analysis and impact evaluation, only those vernal pools within 100 feet of the centerline for an alternative were evaluated. Although the Region recognizes that time constraints and resource limitations make it challenging, it should be recognized that in order to properly assess the impacts of each alternative upon vernal pool resources, all pools (whether certified or potential) within at least 300 feet of the limit of disturbance (not the centerline) should be identified and evaluated. Existing literature, especially Calhoun and deMaynadier (2008) and Klemens and Calhoun (2002), suggest that distances up to 750 feet may be relevant in some landscapes. For the situation here, 300 feet (see footnote 6) is clearly reasonable. Field work in 2008 and 2009 identified several pools which had not previously been identified, and certified several pools previously classified as potential using state guidelines. It would be helpful for the FEIS to include a description of the methodology that was used for locating and documenting vernal pools in the field in order to better understand the possibility that additional pools may have been missed.</p>	<p>All vernal pools within 750 feet of the edge of the limit of work were included in the assessment of impacts in Chapter 4.14.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.48	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Sections 4.16.3.3 - 4.16.3.5 present quantifications of impacts to aquatic resources according to both state and federal laws. The quantifications are confusing. Except for the explanation on page 4.16-61 that equates the Commonwealth's bordering vegetated wetlands category with wetlands under Clean Water Act section 404, little else is clear. For instance, in Table 4.16-57, it is unclear if the Commonwealth's category of bordering land subject to flooding (BLSF) also would be jurisdictional, either in whole or in part, under CWA section 404. The FEIS needs to clearly present impact acreage and characterizations separately according to Massachusetts law, then for the federal Clean Water Act.	The tables in Chapter 4.16 contain two columns summarizing federal/Section 404 jurisdiction impacts--waterbody/waterway and vegetated wetlands.
L-068.49	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	The DEIS, particularly Section 4.17 (Water Resources), presents an adequate evaluation of water quality impacts that could result from construction and operation of the Rapid Bus, Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives. The discussion and conclusions are sound. However, the Region recommends that MassDOT confirm the classifications identified for the water bodies described in section 4.17.2.2 with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection ("MassDEP"). For example, we believe that MassDEP considers the Assonet River to be Class SA, not Class 8. Water quality classifications can be a confusing area because some water bodies change names as they flow through different towns. Though this will likely not change the conclusions drawn on the impacts to water resources, addressing this point in the FEIS would ensure an accurate assessment of water quality impacts.	The classification of water bodies listed in 4.17.2.2, Study Corridor, of the DEIS/DEIR were compared against the most recent classifications available on the MassDEP website. No changes were identified to listed waterways or water bodies within the project area.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.50	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	As shown in Table 4.16-57 of the DEIS (page 4.16-97), the Rapid Bus Alternative would result in approximately 21.5 acres of wetlands being directly filled. In addition, approximately 2.1 acres of vernal pools would be filled, bringing the total acreage for direct filling to wetlands and other waters of the U.S. to approximately 23.6 acres. This alternative would require modifications to 13 existing stream crossings. In addition to permanent impacts, there would be approximately 8.7 acres of temporary direct impacts to wetlands, 1.4 acres of temporary direct impact to vernal pools, and temporary alteration of 1,120 linear feet of "bank." The filling would result from numerous, mostly small fills along both sides of the widened and improved roadways. A few larger fills would occur within the medians of Interstate 93 and State Route 24, and within the confines of existing interchanges along State Route 24.	Thank you for your comment.
L-068.51	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	While the acreage for both wetlands filled and total waters filled would be greatest under this alternative, the Region believes that the severity of the impact upon the affected wetlands and waters would be less than that associated with the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives. The existing roadways that would be widened and upgraded are heavily used roadways along mostly developed corridors where the adjoining wetlands and waters and are, in numerous locations, already degraded. The small, incremental filling of wetlands and other waters along those existing roadways that would occur at numerous locations would have mostly minor to moderate adverse impacts to those aquatic resources. Some water quality maintenance functions would be affected, as would small amounts of wildlife habitat. As described in section 4.15.3.3, the Rapid Bus Alternative would have the fewest adverse impacts upon rare wetland dependent wildlife species. Individually and cumulatively, the Region would not be seriously concerned about these impacts. Still, these adverse impacts would require some degree of compensatory mitigation to address their harmful effects.	The Rapid Bus Alternative has been dismissed from further consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.52	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	As shown in Table 4.16-57 of the DEIS (page 4.16-97), the Stoughton Alternative (diesel or electric) would fill approximately 11.9 acres of wetlands and 1.7 acres of Outstanding Resource Waters, for a total of 13.6 acres of direct wetland fill. This total does not include an uncalculated amount of fill in wetlands identified as "Other Federal" but not quantified (see Tables 4.16-3 to 4.16-7 and 4.16-18 to 4.16-22). Approximately 68% (8.1 acres) of the impacts to wetlands would occur to forest wetlands. In addition to the permanent impacts there would be 12.6 acres of temporary direct impact to wetlands and 2.6 acres of temporary direct impact to vernal pools. There are 132 stream crossings (68 in the Southern Triangle); 34 of the affected streams are perennial. It is unclear whether impacts or modifications would occur to all of these crossings, as the DEIS states that exact impacts will be calculated during the final design process once a LEDPA is determined. This alternative also would alter approximately 3,480 linear feet of "bank, plus an additional 1,216 linear feet of temporary impacts to bank." Id.	Appendix 4.14-A provides an inventory of all culverts within the ROW that cross under the railbed, and includes recommendations for replacement for each. Information on potential mitigation measures for impacts to stream crossings along the Whittenton Branch is provided in Chapter 4.14.
L-068.53	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	As shown in Table 4.16-57 of the DEIS (page 4.16-97), the Whittenton Alternative (diesel or electric) would fill approximately 10.3 acres of wetlands and about 1 acre of Outstanding Resource Waters, for a total of approximately 11.3 acres of direct wetland fill. This total does not include an uncalculated amount of fill in wetlands identified as "Other Federal" but not quantified (see Tables 4.16-3 to 4.16-7). Approximately 66% (6.9 acres) of direct fill would occur in forested wetlands. In addition to the permanent impacts there would be 10.4 acres of temporary direct impact to wetlands and 1.3 acres of temporary direct impact to vernal pools. The number of stream crossings is unspecified, but there would be at least 68 within the Southern Triangle. This alternative also would alter the same approximately 3,480 linear feet of bank, plus 1,216 feet of temporary bank impact as the Stoughton Alternative. Id.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.54	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>In contrast, the Region is greatly concerned about secondary adverse impacts to aquatic resources along those portions of the Stoughton and Whittenton corridors where no embankment exists or where a narrow embankment has been abandoned for decades and the forest canopy now is mostly unbroken. Section 4.14 on Biodiversity, Wildlife and Vegetation, presents a thorough description and reasonable evaluation of secondary adverse impacts upon aquatic resources and wetland dependent wildlife. Still, we believe that the evaluation is lacking adequate detail in a few areas, as explained below.</p> <p>Along portions of the rail corridors where we are more concerned, examples of secondary impacts that may result from this project include downstream changes in hydrology and water quality, decreased primary productivity due to removal of vegetation, and habitat fragmentation and degradation. Degradation of habitat specifically refers to a decrease in the health or ecological integrity of the existing habitat. Edge effect can be viewed as a reduction in habitat integrity at the boundary of a transportation corridor caused by construction disturbance, vegetation clearing, storm water runoff, or other degrading factors that extend into the natural habitat. For example, the DEIS explains that, "[i]n locations where single track sections are proposed (much of the Southern Triangle, sections of the Stoughton Line and along the Whittenton Branch), the canopy gap will vary between approximately 40 to 80 feet in width. In locations where double track sections are proposed, the canopy gap will vary between 60 to 100 feet in width." Page 4.16-80 of the DEIS notes that "[c]anopy clearing would be required along the right-of-way where the elevated trestle would be located within the Hockomock Swamp to accommodate additional height requirements associated with the trestle. Canopy clearing generally occurs within upland forest, though portions would occur in wetland resources. Canopy clearing would not result in additional impacts to wetland resources as this work would occur in uplands." We disagree with this assessment of the potential for additional impacts.</p>	See Chapter 4.16 for the additional evaluations of secondary impacts. Note that the canopy width in Hockomock and Pine Swamps would be 30 feet.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		In forested wetlands with a closed or nearly closed canopy, e.g., substantial portions of the Stoughton alignment through the Hockomock Swamp, even an opening of 40 feet could set in motion serious immediate and longer term secondary adverse impacts to adjoining wetlands and wetland dependent wildlife. The FEIS should provide a more thorough and specific evaluation of the potential for adverse impacts from canopy clearing, especially across the Hockomock Swamp.	
L-068.55	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Several types of environmental harm would result from the construction and operation of the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives. Outright loss of between approximately 10 - 12 acres of wetland habitat would occur. Adjacent aquatic and wetland habitats would be damaged by sedimentation during construction. Even with standard erosion and sediment control measures, decades of experience with these types of projects shows that it is common that physical barriers/controls are not maintained as well as they should be and damage to adjoining aquatic resources occurs. In addition, and especially in forested and shrub wetlands, loss of canopy cover would increase surface and water temperatures and alter light penetration into adjoining areas. Surface water circulation and flow patterns could be altered, possibly drying out some wetlands or making others wetter, both of which would result in substantial changes to plant and wildlife communities. Interruption and/or other decreases of the nutrient production and export functioning of some of these wetland systems to be filled or affected could occur, damaging downstream aquatic communities. All of these adverse impacts would contribute to fragmentation effects that would be caused by both these rail alternatives, and lead to an overall decrease in the productivity and functioning of the affected aquatic systems. The nature, extent, permanence, and severity of these types of secondary impacts need to be more fully evaluated in the FEIS.	See Chapter 4.16 for the additional evaluations of secondary impacts.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.56	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>With respect to methods employed to evaluate secondary impacts, on page 4.14-20, the DEIS explains that only vernal pools located within 100 feet of the centerline for an alternative were analyzed. For the Stoughton Electric Alternative, Table 4.14-13 shows that 91 vernal pools would be adversely affected by direct and secondary impacts. For the Whittenton Electric Alternative, Table 4.14-16 shows that 68 vernal pools would be adversely affected by direct and secondary impacts. However, and as explained above, that 100 foot distance is inadequate to properly assess secondary adverse impacts. It is likely that additional pools that would be affected by secondary adverse impacts from construction and operation of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives were not included in the evaluation. For example, on page 4.14-36, the DEIS explains that for the Stoughton Alternative, "[t]here are several other clusters of vernal pools near the Stoughton Line, located outside of the 100-foot buffer, including a cluster of certified and potential vernal pools south of the North Easton station site; a cluster of certified vernal pools in Easton, between Foundry Street and the utility corridor; a cluster of potential vernal pools north of Bridge Street in Raynham; and a cluster of potential vernal pools south of Pine Swamp in Raynham and Taunton. Vernal pools in the Hockomock Swamp found between Foundry Street and Raynham Park also support a large population of spotted turtles (<i>Clemmys guttata</i>), no longer a state-listed species but still an important biodiversity concern." Impacts to these additional pools should be factored into the analysis to enable a thorough evaluation of each alternative so that the alternative would be least damaging to aquatic resources can be identified.</p>	<p>All vernal pools within 750 feet of the edge of the limit of work were included in the assessment of impacts in Chapter 4.14. The analysis of effects to vernal pools and clusters of vernal pools addresses all of the specific areas referenced in this comment.</p> <p>The limitations of the CAPS analysis are discussed in Section 4.14.3.4.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.57	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>On the other hand, we note that the CAPS model does not appear to be particularly useful when focusing on specific ground level features at a narrower scale. In the Summary Notes of Meeting for the South Coast Rail Wetlands Working Group from its April 16, 2009 meeting, the group discussed wetlands functional evaluation methods and the CAPS model specifically as a wildlife (or biodiversity) assessment method. A representative of Louis Berger, the Corps' consultant, cautioned that CAPS has its limitation. He noted that functional assessment tools need to account appropriately for incremental fills along existing corridors to avoid exaggerating factors such as fringe impacts, and to attribute higher value to affected wetlands as a unit. Whereas the CAPS model may better accomplish the second point with respect to treating wetlands as a unit or system, it does not appear to be sensitive enough to accurately evaluate incremental fills or particular ground features in specific locations. For example, the CAPS model results show no loss of Ecological Integrity Units (Ellis) for the Rapid Bus Alternative because, as the DEIS explains on page 4.14-99, "roadway geometry and other area changes associated with the Rapid Bus Alternative fall below the resolution of the CAPS model which operates at a landscape level of scale." Further, Table 4.14-23, Loss of Index of Ecological Integrity Units, summarizes the CAPS model results for the four rail alternatives and the Rapid Bus. The results show a difference of 7.2 Ellis lost between the Stoughton Alternative with a trestle and without (456.9 IEUs v. 464.1 Ellis, respectively), which is surprisingly small. The difference for the Whittenton Alternative is the same. At several meetings of the Wetlands Working Group, it was widely agreed that a trestle was substantially advantageous for reducing adverse impacts to wildlife, especially to address the barrier effect of a solid fill railbed. If relying on the CAPS model results, one would be hard pressed to reach the same conclusion. Finally, the CAPS model does not assess watershed level impacts and changes to, among other wetland functions, hydrologic flow (other than connectivity), nutrient production and export, or nutrient removal/retention/transformation.</p>	<p>The updated vernal pool inventory is described in Chapter 4.14. NHESP-identified vernal pools within 100 feet of the right-of-way were inspected for the presence of certification characteristics. Potential impacts to vernal pools are described.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Our point is that the CAPS results are helpful when considering broad landscape level biodiversity changes to the South Coast Rail project study area with an operating rail line and without, but are not especially useful in distinguishing adverse impacts among particular rail alternatives to inform a determination of the alternative that is least damaging to aquatic resources. We recommend that the FEIS clarify the relevance and importance of the CAPS model results.</p>	
L-068.58	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p><b>Significance of Impacts</b></p> <p>As explained above, the Region seeks a variety of additional information about the extent, nature, and severity of direct and secondary adverse impacts to aquatic resources within the Stoughton and Whittenton rail corridors. Until we have evaluated that additional information, in combination with the information provided in chapter 5 of the DEIS (related to the cumulative effects on the aquatic ecosystem stemming from induced growth), we cannot reach conclusions regarding the significance of those adverse impacts and whether those alternatives could comply with section 230.10(c) of the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.16 addresses direct and secondary impacts to aquatic resources. Cumulative effects to water resources are described in Chapter 5. This information may be used to determine compliance with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines.</p>
L-068.59	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>On page 4.16-60 of the DEIS, it notes that "[t]o the extent practicable, new or replaced culverts would be designed to comply with the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards. Where the stream crossing standards could not be met, stream crossings would be improved to the greatest extent practicable." The DEIS notes on page 4.14-72 that the design of each culvert will be evaluated during the final design process to assess the potential effects on hydrology, stream flow, and fisheries. The Region supports these improvements to culverts for all stream crossings, regardless of the alternative selected.</p>	<p>Information on improvements at stream crossings is provided in Chapter 4.14.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.60	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	On page 4.16-70 of the DEIS, it notes that "reconstruction of the right-of-way associated with the New Bedford Main Line would not result in additional fragmentation of aquatic habitat because the existing embankment would be re-used and existing culverts and bridges would be replaced in-kind, subject to consideration of the need not to compromise wetland hydrology." We strongly recommend that, when considering any stream crossings where concerns arise about adverse impacts to up- or down-gradient wetland hydrology, the FEIS specifically provide that MassDOT will, whenever practicable, utilize culvert designs that maintain hydrologic flows and improve wildlife movements across the ROW. Possibilities include dry culverts for wildlife passage, or constructing culverts with grade control devices at inlets.	Information on improvements at stream crossings is provided in Chapter 4.14.
L-068.61	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Page 4.14-98 of the DEIS explains the use of "turtle gates" as a construction period mitigation measure that may be used to allow small vertebrates to cross the right-of-way during critical breeding periods. In addition to the temporary use of turtle gates during construction, under-rail troughs and other permanent features such as the "critter crossings" constructed on the MBTA Greenbush line should be fully considered where appropriate and practicable along the right-of-way. This feature is discussed on page 4.14-109 of the DEIS as a potential measure to minimize the direct and secondary impacts on biodiversity. Page 4.14-110 of DEIS explains that the wildlife crossings constructed along the MBTA Greenbush Line have been shown to be used by numerous wildlife species, reducing the barrier effect of the rail. The FEIS should include more detailed information about potential locations for and design of wildlife crossings for all the alternatives.	Information on improvements at stream crossings is provided in Chapter 4.14.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.62	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	On page 3-66 and 3-67, the DEIS describes features of the Stoughton Alternative, including that "[a] trestle section is proposed in Easton and Raynham to minimize environmental impacts to the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern." Elsewhere in the DEIS, it explains that the proposed trestle would be 8,500 feet long. Though the descriptions in the DEIS appear to include the trestle as a standard feature for the Stoughton Alternative, the FEIS should be explicit that the trestle is the only way the Stoughton (or Whittenton) Alternative would be considered and constructed. Furthermore, and again for the Stoughton Alternative, the Region believes that the FEIS should also include an evaluation of installing a trestle for the Pine Swamp crossing for the same reasons that the trestle is incorporated into the Hockomock Swamp crossing.	The Hockomock Swamp trestle is the same for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives. The requested evaluation of the Pine Swamp trestle is provided in Appendix 3.2-D.
L-068.63	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	On a related point, we did not see the issue of trestle maintenance and emergency access addressed within the DEIS. The FEIS should describe how maintenance and emergency access will be accomplished along the 1.6 mile long Hockomock Swamp trestle crossing, especially if additional filling would be needed to construct a permanent or temporary access road.	As described in the Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C), access for operations and maintenance would be from the trestle structure. In addition, the Construction Staging Technical Report (Appendix 3.2-F) summarizes phasing in order to maintain access throughout the corridor. No wetland fill is required for access roads in any location.
L-068.64	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	On page 4.16- 104 of the DEIS, the section on Mitigation Goals and Objectives states that, "[the quantity of estimated permanent impacts and the associated proposed mitigation goals that have been identified are presumed to be an overestimation attributed to the methodology used to perform wetland delineation along the alternatives ... It is expected that wetland impacts and the associated mitigation area requirements would decrease following field delineation." The Region is less sanguine in this respect. While some aquatic resources may have been overestimated, it is likely that others have been missed or underestimated.	Detailed wetland delineations of the practicable (i.e., Stoughton and Whittenton) alternatives followed federal wetland delineation methods and were required by the Corps. Accurate figures for wetland impacts of each are provided in the FEIS/FEIR. Comparative wetland and other environmental resource impacts of these alternatives were fully considered in the Corps evaluation.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-068.65	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<p>In section 4.16.3.6, the DEIS describes federal and state requirements for compensatory mitigation, as well as a conceptual framework and approach for how MassDOT will develop a compensation plan once the LEDPA is determined. We generally agree with these descriptions.</p> <p>However, it is premature to apply compensatory mitigation ratios and produce compensation requirements, as shown in Tables 4.16-60 through 4.16-65 for the rail and Rapid Bus Alternatives. As explained elsewhere in this Attachment, several issues remain to be addressed regarding the extent and nature of both direct and secondary adverse impacts and, more importantly, the severity of those impacts. That additional information on adverse impacts will bear directly on not only the appropriate mitigation ratios, but also whether the extent, types and severity of adverse impacts from the alternatives, rail in particular, can be adequately compensated.</p>	See Chapter 4.16 for additional information mitigation ratios. Additional information on proposed mitigation was requested by the MEPA office and other commenters on the DEIS/DEIR.
L-068.66	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	In that vein, on pages 4.16-107 and 4.16-111, the DEIS notes that, "the majority of all impacts would occur in areas of deciduous wooded swamp wetlands." In addition, on page 4.16-106, the DEIS notes that, "due to the scale of this project, and the limited availability of restoration opportunities in eastern Massachusetts, it is likely that (compensatory) mitigation would be characterized as creation." In light of the cautions we stress above regarding the risks and unproven record regarding wetland creation in general and forest wetland creation in particular, we believe that it will be especially challenging for MassDOT to develop an adequate compensation plan.	Comment noted. Draft wetland mitigation measures have been included in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-068.67	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	At this point, the Region has not reached a final conclusion with respect to compliance with the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, due to the need for the additional information identified herein.	Comment noted.

## **Federal and State Elected Officials**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-003.01	State Representative Geraldine Creedon, State Senator Brian Joyce, State Senator Thomas	Several concerned constituents have contacted our offices regarding the amount of time allowed for comment on the DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement) for the South Coast Rail project. Due to the complex nature of the recent report, we request that the comment period for this document be extended an additional 60 days. We believe that our constituents should have a fair opportunity to thoroughly review and consider their comments carefully, and the original 60 day timetable does not afford them that possibility. This extension is necessary so that this 2,500 page report may be properly reviewed and commented on by all interested parties.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-001.01	State Representative William Galvin, State Senator Brian Joyce, and State Representative Louis Kafka	Due to the complex nature of the recent report your organization released regarding the South Coast Rail, and the fact that it affects so many individuals and communities, we respectively request that the comment period for this document be extended to 120 days. We feel this extra time is necessary so that this 2,500 page report may be properly reviewed and commented on by those interested in this project. While we acknowledge that the reviewing of these comments by your organization is an essential part of "next steps", we firmly believe that our constituents should have a fair opportunity for review and submittal, and two months is not sufficient to read and comment on such a substantial document.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
E-004.01	State Senator Brian Joyce	I wanted to reach out to you because Senator Joyce has many constituents in his district who are very interested in the South Coast Rail project. Because of that, Senator Joyce was wondering if there was any way to schedule a public hearing in Canton, Easton or Stoughton.	The DEIS/DEIR public hearings in two locations provided sufficient opportunity for public input.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-021.01	State Representative Robert Koczera	Based on the following criteria: project purpose; practicability; environmental impact; ridership; travel times, vehicle miles traveled and air quality, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) concludes that the Stoughton route provides the best service to the South Coast while having the least impact on the environment. Also, the Stoughton route is the most practicable. It is the most direct route to Boston and the less congested of the alternative routes proposed. In addition, the Stoughton route provides the most stops at locations thereby providing more of an opportunity for residents of the region to obtain jobs.	Thank you for your comment.
L-021.02	State Representative Robert Koczera	The extension of commuter rail service to the cities indicated above is critical to the economic growth of the southeast region and the Commonwealth. Rail service will enhance regional mobility, support smart growth development strategies in southeast communities, and create greater connectivity between the region and Boston, a cultural and economic hub for New England. Also, rail service to the southeast offers young professionals currently residing in Boston affordable housing opportunities and a reasonable commute that will enhance economic growth in the Commonwealth.	Thank you for your comment.
L-021.03	State Representative Robert Koczera	National policies emphasizing energy conservation and alternative sources of energy strengthens the need to provide passenger rail service to the southeast region as an alternative to the congested highways, Routes 24 and 93 leading to Boston. Restoration of commuter rail service along the Stoughton route to Boston provides greater benefits to the environment relative to air quality and traffic congestion as well as significant socioeconomic benefits to the region and state.	Thank you for your comment.
L-021.04	State Representative Robert Koczera	In conclusion, I urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the decision making process for the South Coast Rail Project by issuing the Final Environment Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIS/FEIR) and the Record of Decision (DOR) as soon as possible.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-044.01	State Senator Mark Montigny	Given the amount of time that has lapsed since this project was first conceived, I am deeply concerned about the lack of progress in recent years. It would be my hope that the final Environmental Impact Report be published quickly, identifying the least environmentally damaging practicable route, maximizing the speed and effectiveness of the new line, and allowing construction to begin as soon as possible.	Thank you for your comment.
L-044.02	State Senator Mark Montigny	After review of the DEIS, it appears that the Stoughton Alternative and the Whittenton Alternative are the most beneficial to meeting the goal of providing the vital link for commuters from the South Coast and to the City of Boston. Both alternatives cross the abandoned rail road grades through the Hockomock Swamp, so the environmental impacts would be similar. The choice between two alternatives comes down to a decision of which one will provide the fastest and most reliable service to South Station.	Thank you for your comment.
L-044.03	State Senator Mark Montigny	In many ways this is an economic justice issue. An alternative that adds even a few additional minutes to the commute could make the new rail line that much less appealing to people who might use it as standard mode of transportation. The longer commute time of the Whittenton Variation could be justifiable if there was a clear-cut and significant difference between the environmental impacts of it and Stoughton alternative, but the magnitude of the difference between them is minimal. Therefore, it appears that the Stoughton Alternative is the best choice for the commuters that will utilize the South Coast rail extension.	Thank you for your comment.
L-023.01	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	We are pleased that the route preferred by the Mass DOT is the direct Stoughton Route, as this is also the preferred route of the city of Taunton. This is the most direct route from Boston to the communities on the South Coast. It is also the least disruptive route through the city of Taunton, as it only crosses over five streets at grade.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-023.02	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	<p>We do not support any other route for the proposed South Coast Rail and are adamantly opposed to the so-called "Whittenton route," as this would create 14 street crossings at grade.</p> <p>The crossings on the Whittenton route would be relatively close together in congested areas of the city, creating a disaster with regard to traffic flow. Another grave concern is the inability of public safety vehicles to reach their destinations in an emergency, creating a public safety hazard</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-023.03	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	The city has already acquired property on Arlington Street that abuts the site of the proposed downtown station. We understand the state is going to examine our ability to support the train station. It is anticipated that the state would assist the city in making improvements around the Dean Street/Arlington Street intersections.	Thank you for your comment.
L-023.04	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	The community is excited to be part of the enhanced rail service to southeastern Massachusetts and looks forward to the many economic benefits the South Coast Rail may bring as we seek to revitalize the economy and communities in this region.	Thank you for your comment.
E-053.01	State Representative Elizabeth Poirier	Rep. Poirier indicated that she is happy with the chosen route through Stoughton. Also, she would like to mention how pleased she is in how thorough Kristina Egan has been in all her efforts regarding this project.	Thank you for your comment.
E-025.01	State Senator Michael Rodrigues	I write to provide comments on the South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report. For well over a decade, the potential impact the reintroduction of the passenger rail on the South Coast has been studied as part of local, regional and statewide planning efforts, and many potential benefits have been identified. The South Coast is very unique in that it is one of the fastest growing areas within the Commonwealth. This area has tremendous potential to grow enormously in economic development. Improved transportation access could be a vehicle for this growth, development, and job creation.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-025.02	State Senator Michael Rodrigues	<p>The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a fifty mile radius of Boston without rail transit service. This rail service would provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the Commonwealth. The current highway network connecting the South Coast to the Boston area is inadequate for the needs of today, causing extensive traffic congestion, significant safety concerns and negatively effecting air quality, with expectations for even greater congestion in the future. The South Coast rail extension could help to mitigate some of this traffic growth in the region. The rail would strengthen the South Coast's economic links to the Greater Boston area and other satellite urban centers within the metro region. Furthermore, the rail access expands the South Coast's potential labor market and is particularly attractive to high-end management and professional employees.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
E-025.03	State Senator Michael Rodrigues	<p>In the past, commuter rail access has been a key factor in major development and redevelopment projects across the nation, and has consistently lead to increased property values in areas surrounding the train stations both nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Essentially, the commuter rail could aid the growing tourism industry in the South Coast by providing visitors to the state with another means of transportation to experience the South Coast's many natural resources, cultural institutions and other amenities.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-025.04	State Senator Michael Rodrigues	I strongly support the Commuter rail expanding to the South Coast. The local South Coast delegation has been coordinating with the State for over three years on the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the project itself. I urge the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This project is extremely important to our region. My constituents have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for over two decades and are anxious for this process to be completed so that we may move onto the next critical stage of the project.	Thank you for your comment.
L-041.01	State Representative William Straus	As the House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation and as State Representative for the 10th Bristol District, which encompasses the towns of Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed South Coast Rail project and the South Coast Rail Project's recommendation to build the so-called Stoughton alternative.	Thank you for your comment.
L-041.02	State Representative William Straus	The South Coast Rail will provide enormous benefit to those individuals within my district and the surrounding area, as it will present a long-awaited, viable public transit service to Boston for a region and a population that currently lacks access to practical public transit options. In addition, the South Coast Rail will provide a much-needed boost to the local economy by promoting complementary development projects along the route.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-041.03	State Representative William Straus	The Stoughton alternative recommendation is based on extended research and a variety of calculated assessments, including cost considerations, travel times, environmental impact concerns, and potential ridership numbers along each of the proposed routes. Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation were briefed on the South Coast Rail project March 21, 2011 and the determination by the South Coast Rail Project and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) that the Stoughton alternative was the preferred option. The Stoughton alternative decision was clearly outlined at the time of the briefing and continues to remain, in my opinion, the preferred option.	Thank you for your comment.
L-041.04	State Representative William Straus	I am aware of the recent public hearings, including those in Easton and Mansfield, where the public has voiced concerns about the potential negative impact of the Stoughton alternative on their neighborhoods. Although I appreciate and understand these concerns, I remain convinced that the Stoughton alternative is the solution that presents the fewest negative impacts on the surrounding environment, and constitutes a return of a mass transit to a corridor and landscape where it existed for decades.	Thank you for your comment.
L-086.01	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	We write to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). To facilitate efficient use of government resources and to expedite the environmental review process, we also request that the Corps consult with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office to establish a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) that identifies one route – the Stoughton alternative – for further study. We believe this document should address reasonable outstanding issues raised by the public and/or reviewing agencies during the current comment period.	The LEDPA discussion is provided in the FEIS/FEIR. The FEIS/FEIR includes responses to comments on the DEIS/DEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-086.02	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	We also ask that the Corps not extend the comment period beyond the two months provided, ending May 27. MassDOT has conducted a wide-ranging and thorough civic engagement process, involving all of the state and federal environmental regulatory agencies in a four-year process. In addition, MassDOT posted technical reports that form the basis for the report in 2009, and all of the data collection and associated methodologies have been available for agency and public review for over a year.	Thank you for your comment.
L-086.03	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	As the environmental process moves into the next phase – the development of the Final Environmental Impact Report and Statement – we urge the Corps to prepare this document within a year. We also request that, after MEPA issues a Certificate, the Corps publish a schedule for completing the FEIS selecting the LEDPA, and issuing the Record of Decision. We understand that the schedule is partially dependent on MassDOT providing necessary data, so we ask that the Corps coordinate with MassDOT in the development and publication of the schedule.	Comment noted.
L-086.04	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	Since the announcement of commuter rail expansion to the South Coast, we have whole-heartedly supported this exciting opportunity to restore passenger rail service to Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton. These are the only three cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by commuter rail stations. In restoring this service, the Commonwealth would be catalyzing nearly half a billion dollars in economic development every year.	Comment noted.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-086.05	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	With the construction of the proposed Whale's Tooth station in New Bedford, the project will revitalize New Bedford's waterfront through the construction of a multi-modal green station using renewable energy technologies. It will connect area buses, ferry service, future passenger rail, and house a "one-stop" career center, while building a signature pedestrian and bicycle bridge that will be a New Bedford landmark and connect neighborhoods to the waterfront. Likewise, the proposed stations in Fall River will open under-utilized land along the waterfront for development and will stimulate a local economy that has been hard hit in recent times.	Comment noted.
L-086.06	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	In addition, the South Coast Rail project will create new jobs and infuse new life into our older, struggling industrial cities. Residents of southeastern Massachusetts will be able to access new jobs and services in the Boston area – jobs and services that many low-income residents cannot currently access. Boston-area residents, in turn, will be able to more easily take advantage of affordable housing along the South Coast.	Comment noted.
L-086.07	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	Of the options under consideration, we believe that the Stoughton alternative offers the best balance of transportation benefits, economic development, and environmental impacts. As the Draft Environmental Impact Statement shows, the Stoughton route meets the project purpose with the least environmental damage. Rail trip time is significantly shorter than Rapid Bus, and a direct Stoughton route is the fastest option. As you know, trip time for passengers is a critical consideration in determining the best alternative. The shorter travel time will attract more riders and take more vehicles off the roads, improving regional mobility. The success of the South Coast Rail initiative will indeed depend on attracting and sustaining new rail passengers who are looking for a quicker transit alternative to travel to the metropolitan Boston area.	Comment noted.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-086.08	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	In that regard, we also believe that the Stoughton Electric Alternative is the best option available. At the same time that we are committing ourselves to investing in the next great transportation project in Massachusetts, we should also be investing in an energy source that is sustainable into the future. With electric trains, we are giving the rail line the flexibility to switch to an alternative source of energy that may present itself down the road, including wind and solar. The Electric Alternatives' travel times are noticeably shorter than their diesel counterparts, which again will attract and sustain new passengers along the rail corridor. At a time when we are looking to curb our carbon footprint wherever possible, we should not ignore this opportunity to cut emissions. At the same time, we urge the Corps to allow for the diesel alternative to be built first with a commitment from the state to convert the line to electric as resources allow.	Comment noted.
L-086.09	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	Given the cost difference between diesel and electric, a phased approach may be the most practical. With respect to the natural environment in the project area, the Stoughton alternatives have less impact on wetlands than the Rapid Bus and Attleboro options. Of the impacts, 1.8 of Hockomock Swamp acres are considered an "Area of Critical Environmental Concern," and consist primarily of lost wetlands that have formed on the former rail bed.	Comment noted.
L-086.10	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	The project includes relocating a stream currently on the rail bed back to its natural channel, which will create ecological benefits. Moreover, the Commonwealth has committed to constructing an elevated trestle through the swamp, which will facilitate the movement of animals across the rail alignment. While there are potential impacts to threatened and endangered species, we believe that, in coordination with regulatory agencies, the project can and will take the utmost care to avoid and mitigate these impacts. We also suggest that mitigation for biodiversity impacts be included for development in the FEIS/FEIR.	The stream relocation mentioned in the comment is no longer proposed based on coordination/feedback from the ICG. The trestle is included in the project and mitigation is discussed in resource chapters and Chapter 7.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-086.11	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	The Attleboro route fails operationally, so it is not practicable. It also has a higher cost per rider. Fixing these problems would involve adding a third and fourth track to parts of the heavily-travelled Northeast Corridor. Adding these tracks would amount to more than double the cost of the Stoughton direct alternative. We do not feel that this would be a wise use of federal or state dollars.	Comment noted. The Attleboro Alternative was eliminated from further consideration for reasons noted in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-086.12	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	The Whittenton alternative, while superior to the Rapid Bus and the Attleboro rail alternatives, does not appropriately serve the people of New Bedford and Fall River. For example, these residents would experience a longer trip time (by over 10 minutes each way). This longer commute time might arguably be justifiable if there were significant differences between the environmental impacts of the Whittenton and Stoughton alternatives. But there are not any significant differences. Moreover, the Stoughton alternative provides greater air quality and climate benefits.	Comment noted. The Whittenton Alternative is discussed and analyzed in the FEIS/FEIR and after analysis was eliminated from further consideration.
L-086.13	U.S. Senator John Kerry, U.S. Representatives Barney Frank and James McGovern	In determining the alternative to study in the FEIS/FEIR, we urge the Corps and MEPA to take a holistic approach when weighing the alternatives against one another. We are confident that the Stoughton alternative is the best one.	Comment noted. Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive evaluation of alternatives.

**MEPA Office**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.01	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	General - MassDOT should prepare a FEIR in accordance with the general guidance for outline and content found in Section 11.07 of the MEPA regulations as modified by this Scope. The FEIR should include maps, plans and other graphics at a reasonable scale to facilitate review and comment. The FEIR should include a list of permits and approvals required, an update on any changes since the filing of the DEIR/S, and a copy of this Certificate.	The requested information is provided in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-088.02	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Wetlands and Biodiversity - The project will require several variances from the Wetlands regulations performance standards. One of the three criteria for a variance is a demonstration that the variance is necessary to accommodate an overriding public interest. The FEIR should further refine how the proposed Stoughton Electric rail will advance the public interests identified in the DEIR/S, which include: the need for public transportation from the south coast region to Boston and benefits to the south coast region in terms of public transit equity, service distribution and ridership, air quality and climate change improvements, and opportunities for smart growth and sustainable development as an alternative to sprawl.	A public interest review is provided in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Variance section of the Regulatory Compliance chapter of the FEIS/FEIR (see Section 8.7.3.1).
L-088.03	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	To demonstrate eligibility for a variance MassDOT must also proposed mitigation measures that will allow the project to be conditioned to contribute to Wetland Protection Act interests. Mitigation measures will be required to offset the project's direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. The FEIS/FEIR should describe specific mitigation measures that will directly mitigate wetland impacts, improve wetland conditions, and avoid future indirect and cumulative impacts.	Regulatory compliance is addressed in Chapter 8. Information on wetland mitigation and the mitigation site search process is provided in Chapter 4.16. "Mitigation" for indirect and cumulative impacts related to future development will occur through the implementation of the Corridor Plan. A monitoring and reporting plan to support implementation of the Corridor Plan is provided in Section 5.5.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.04	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Wetlands and Biodiversity - The FEIR should document any revisions to wetland boundaries and project-related impacts based on more detailed field delineations for the proposed Stoughton route, and boundaries as approved by local Conservation Commissions. The FEIR should quantify temporary as well as permanent wetlands impacts, for individual project components and cumulatively for the entire project (including stations and layover facilities). Direct and indirect wetlands impacts related to canopy clearance should be further evaluated in the FEIR. Some tables in the DEIR/S reference total "wetlands" impacts but do not include all resource impacts or temporary impacts. In discussing and summarizing wetlands impacts, the FEIR should clarify (in table headings for example) whether the reference is to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) and ORW only or to the total amount of project-related wetland impacts, and whether it is referring to permanent, temporary or both combined. Where there are differences in categorization under state and federal regulations, the FEIR should clarify and differentiate as appropriate. The FEIR should include a summary table with a breakdown of all wetland resource impacts(including BVW, Bank, Riverfront Area, and BLSF) for the entire project (rail, stations/layovers, roadway improvements, and other components) so that the individual resource impacts and the cumulative totals are summarized in one place. Temporary and indirect impacts should be included in the summary of wetlands impacts, as well as direct and permanent impacts.</p>	<p>Updated wetland mapping for the Stoughton Alternative is provided in Section 4.16.8. Direct and indirect impacts are described in Sections 4.16.9.2 and 4.16.9.3, respectively. MassDOT has received confirmation of all wetland delineations through Orders of Resource Area Delineation issued by each municipality's Conservation Commission (as well as MassDEP for Easton), and submitted a request for Jurisdictional Determination to the Corps for approval.</p> <p>The potential wetland impacts that may result from the Stoughton Alternative for each municipality are described in Section 4.16.9.2. As described, permanent and temporary impacts were determined based on the limits of disturbance (plus a 4-foot wide buffer zone for temporary impacts) for the project at the current level of design. Wetland impacts for each project component were not separately quantified.</p> <p>Rehabilitating the existing commuter rail and freight rail lines will not affect riparian habitat, as described in Section 4.14.3. Restoring out-of-service rail right-of-way through Stoughton, Easton, Raynham and Taunton will likely require that vegetation within the right-of-way, adjacent to wetlands, be removed to the proposed width of the ballast (ranging from 25 to 40 feet, depending on the topography and the number of tracks). Section 4.14.3.2 provides an updated impact analysis including impacts to canopy clearing/fragmentation.</p> <p>The tables provided in Chapter 4.16 include direct impacts to all wetland resource types; the tables list potential indirect impacts to the functions of the wetlands.</p> <p>The tables in Chapters 4.14 are titled with references to direct, secondary and/or indirect, and permanent or temporary alterations, as appropriate. The Chapter 4.14 tables include direct impacts for all wetland resource types.</p> <p>Direct impacts (both permanent and temporary) were calculated for resource areas under both state and federal regulations. Impacts are included for all elements of the</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
			project. Direct impacts to resource areas are presented in Chapter 4.14. Table 4.16-44 and Table 4.16-45 summarize the direct impacts to state resource areas (including BVW, Bank, RA, and BLSF) for each municipality, and for the project in total.
L-088.05	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Wetlands and Biodiversity - The FEIR should include information on the location and volume of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) that will be impacted by the project and details on proposed compensatory flood storage mitigation. The WPA requires that compensatory storage be provided at or near the points of impact. MassDEP has indicated that flexibility exists to consolidate mitigation for some resource impacts into more centralized areas within the watershed rather than individual mitigation sites at each mitigation location. But this approach does not necessarily apply to BLSF. The FEIR should include detailed plans for BLSF mitigation and demonstrate how proposed mitigation will meet WPA requirements. The FEIR should quantify the total area of Riverfront Area impacted by the project, provide a breakdown of impacts at specific locations, describe how work proposed in riverfront will meet applicable performance standards, and provide details of mitigation plans for riverfront impacts.	<p>Impacts to BLSF for each municipality are described in Section 4.16.9.2. Mitigation measures for impacts to BLSF are provided.</p> <p>Impacts to Riverfront Areas are presented in Section 4.16.9. Descriptions of how work proposed will meet applicable standards are presented in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 8, Regulatory Compliance.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.06	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Wetlands and Biodiversity - The DEIR/S indicates that vernal pool impact assessment is based on data from surveys within 100 feet of the center of the ROW. As discussed at meetings of the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG), vernal pools within 100 feet of the edge of the limit of work should be included in the assessment of impacts as well as vernal pools further away from the ROW. The ICG agreed (meeting minutes 4/16/2009) that the direct impacts will include loss of upland habitat where the limit of work is either 600/750 from a vernal pool (biodiversity impacts); potential impacts to vernal pool habitat if the limit of work is within 100 feet of the edge of the vernal pool wetland; and impacts to vernal pools if the work is within a wetland containing a vernal pool. The FEIR should update the vernal pool impact assessment for the Stoughton route to clarify vernal pool and vernal pool habitat impacts, as agreed by ICG, and to inform the proposed mitigation plan. The FEIR should include the results of additional field work or other data gathering needed to complete the assessment. MassDOT should consult with the NHESP about survey methods prior to initiating additional vernal pool surveys. The FEIR should describe how impacts to vernal pools and vernal pool habitat will be avoided, minimized, or mitigated, and include detailed mitigation plans to compensate for adverse impacts. The FEIR should also discuss potential measures to eliminate existing All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) impacts on vernal pools. The FEIR should include a draft Vegetation Management Plan and identify no spray zones for protection of rare species and other wildlife.	<p>As described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area. Chapter 4.14 includes measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to vernal pools.</p> <p>The trestle through the Hockomock swamp will eliminate ridership along that section of right-of-way, which accounts for the most ATV usage. Signs discouraging usage are proposed elsewhere along the right-of-way. MassDOT will work with adjacent landowners to protect vernal pools adjacent to the right-of-way at these locations through conservation restrictions or similar measures. Section 4.14.3.2 describes the MBTA's Vegetation Management Plan.</p> <p>Information on the vegetation management plan is provided in Chapter 4.14, with additional information specific to the Hockomock trestle in Appendix 3.2-C.</p>
L-088.07	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Wetlands and Biodiversity - The FEIR should expand upon the analysis of wetlands functions and values in the DEIR/S to include a more detailed analysis for the proposed Stoughton rail. The FEIR should include narrative descriptions of wetlands functions and values of each wetland impacted directly and indirectly by the proposed project. The mitigation plan should describe how the lost functions and values will be mitigated.	Sections 4.16.9.2 and 4.16.9.3 provide an analysis of the Stoughton Alternative's impacts on wetland functions and values. The functions and values of each wetland are shown on figures in Chapter 4.16. Section 4.16.8 describes the existing wetland resource areas and impacts to wetlands and provides a summary of impacts for the entire Whittenton Alternative.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.08	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Wetlands and Biodiversity - The FEIR should include a detailed evaluation of potential mitigation measures to improve habitat connectivity by methods such as wildlife passage structures through the rail bed and improvements to stream crossings to facilitate passage of fish and wildlife designed so as not to compromise the hydrology of wetlands on either side of the rail bed. Potential rail bed modifications should be evaluated using the CAPS methodology to determine those potential modifications that would result in the most improvement in connectivity and wetland condition. The evaluation of opportunities for connectivity improvement measures should be conducted along the entire rail alignment. The FEIR should evaluate opportunities to enhance wetlands near the Raynham Dog Track on the west side of the alignment as well as potential "undevelopment" and restoration of portions of the dog track site. The FEIR should identify measures that MassDOT is committed to implement.</p>	<p>Section 4.14.3.6 describes the improvements to bridges and culverts, as well as installation of wildlife passage structures, to facilitate wildlife crossing the rail bed. As described in the Chapter, a hydraulic analysis would be conducted (during preliminary or final design) of culverts that connect wetlands to ensure that the hydrology of wetlands would not be adversely affected by a replacement structure. No new culverts are proposed.</p> <p>Section 4.14.3.4 provides a summary of the CAPS analysis that was presented in the DEIS/DEIR. As discussed, the CAPS analysis is relatively coarse-grained and is not an appropriate tool to evaluate optimization for increased connectivity and wetland conditions.</p> <p>The location of the stream was field delineated along with other resource areas along the right of way, and is shown in figures provided in Chapter 4.16. Site visits were conducted to determine the characteristics of the stream and the functions and values it provides. The stream is not a natural formation and does not provide any functions or values other than drainage. A preliminary design concept for relocating the stream was presented to the ICG. Based on agency input, relocation of the stream was deemed impractical and the consensus of reviewing agencies was that resources would be better spent elsewhere on other mitigation efforts. The original channel of the stream would be restored in place on the west side of the right-of-way, and the stream would discharge into the wetlands adjacent to Site B.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.09	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Wetlands and Biodiversity - Additional Scope requirements related to stream crossings, trestle design and mitigation are outlined below. The analysis and design plans required should be at a sufficient level of detail to allow permitting agencies and other reviewers to fully understand the type and extent of environmental impacts, and to provide sufficient information for the detailed mitigation plan that will be included in the FEIR. If some of the information cannot be provided in the FEIR due to the level of design detail required, MassDOT should explain why this is the case, include a schedule for development of the information, and MassDOT's best estimate of project impacts based on the information and analysis prepared for the FEIR. MassDOT should consult with the Interagency Coordinating Group during FEIR preparation to discuss any aspects of the required analysis for which information may not be complete, and to obtain input from the group on the appropriate level of detail to include in the FEIR.	<p>Stream crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.14 and Appendix 4.14-A. Appendix 4.14-A provides an inventory of the culverts and bridges, and the trestle design is described in the Hockomock Swamp Trestle Technical Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C).</p> <p>MassDOT has coordinated with the ICG regarding development of the mitigation plan, as described in Chapter 4.16.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.10	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stream Crossings - The FEIR should include details on the existing conditions at stream crossings, explain where culverts will be replaced or modified. The FEIR should include designs for proposed culverts, bridges, or other alterations at stream crossings and evaluate potential direct and indirect hydrological changes, including those that may impact adjoining wetlands. Any new culverts should be designed so as not to compromise the hydrology of wetlands on either side of the crossing. The analysis should address all stream crossings where work is proposed, including the Southern Triangle. Mitigation should be proposed for any unavoidable impacts. The FEIR should include detailed plans for the proposed relocation of the stream that runs along the former railroad berm near the Raynham Dog Track. The FEIR should assess the environmental impacts and benefits of the proposed relocation, including identification of any additional wetlands impacts associated with stream relocation within the Hockomock Swamp or potential Article 97 land impacts.	<p>Stream crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.14 and Appendix 4.14-A, including in the Southern Triangle.</p> <p>The location of the stream was field delineated along with other resource areas along the right of way, and is shown in figures in Chapter 4.16. The stream is discussed in Sections 4.16.10 of the FEIS/FEIR. Site visits were conducted to determine the characteristics of the stream and the functions and values it provides. The stream is not a natural formation and does not provide any functions or values other than drainage. A preliminary design concept for relocating the stream was presented to the ICG. Based on agency input, relocation of the stream was deemed impractical and the consensus of reviewing agencies was that resources would be better spent elsewhere on other mitigation efforts. The original channel of the stream would be restored in place on the west side of the right-of-way, and the stream would discharge into the wetlands adjacent to Site B. Article 97 issues will be addressed if stream relocation or mitigation measures would affect Article 97-protected properties.</p>
L-088.11	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stream Crossings - The FEIR should identify the locations for proposed culvert replacement and for new culverts and discuss in detail the proposed project's consistency with Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards. As noted in MassDEP's comment letter, compliance with Stream Crossing Standards is fully required for new culverts reviewed pursuant to the WPA and 401 regulations. The FEIR analysis should include an evaluation of culvert extension impacts to fish, amphibians, reptiles, and other wildlife passage. The FEIR should evaluate opportunities for maximizing hydrological connections between wetlands for enhancement and restoration as well as for flood capacity.	Appendix 4.14-A identifies culvert replacement locations. All new bridges or replaced culverts will be designed to meet the Standards where such design is not constrained by engineering requirements or unless culvert does not have wildlife value.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.12	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stream Crossings - The FEIR should include an analysis of spans and open bottom arches to meet the Stream Crossing Standards, and consider such arches as mitigation measures throughout the entire rail alignment to the extent they are practicable to improve fish and wildlife passage, and do not interfere with safe train operations. Any closed bottom arch design should include an analysis of measures to install and maintain the stone that requires embedding at a depth of at least two feet. I refer MassDOT to the comments from MassDEP for additional guidance on stream crossing design.	<p>Culverts that will be replaced will be designed to the Stream Crossing general standards, which require open-bottom structures, where not constrained by engineering requirements. The expense of spans and arches, which are recommended by the Optimum standards, is not warranted because similar ecological benefits can be obtained by open-bottom culverts.</p> <p>Culverts that will be replaced will be designed to the Stream Crossing general standards where not constrained by engineering requirements. As described in Section 4.14.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR an analysis of each culvert recommended for replacement to meet Stream Crossing Standards will be conducted during preliminary and final design.</p>
L-088.13	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Trestle Design and ROW Access - The FEIR should evaluate the engineering feasibility of constructing the proposed trestle in wetland soils and evaluate the feasibility of constructing a trestle through the Pine Swamp also. The FEIR should also discuss how access will be achieved for any maintenance or emergency situation along portions of the rail ROW, including sections of the rail located in the Hockomock and Pine Swamps.	<p>Soil evaluations for the Hockomock Trestle are addressed in Appendix 3.2-C.</p> <p>The South Coast Rail Pine Swamp Trestle Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-D) compares the current at-grade design through the Pine Swamp with a trestle option similar to the structure proposed for the Hockomock Swamp. As documented in the memorandum, a trestle could be constructed through Pine Swamp but is not practicable based on cost, particularly when considered in the context of impacts to biological resources.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.14	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Mitigation - The FEIR should identify targeted lands for acquisition by MassDOT as mitigation for the cumulative and indirect impacts of the project. The analysis of secondary impacts and smart growth measures in the DEWS concludes that aggressive implementation of smart growth can reduce habitat impacts by almost 50 percent compared to the build without mitigation scenario. Cumulative and indirect impacts of the project are estimated at 250 acres of habitat loss that includes loss of high quality wetlands, rare species habitat, and biodiversity. A variance from the WPA regulations is required for the project's impacts to rare species. One concrete way for MassDOT to translate its smart growth planning into resource protection is to fund for conservation-protected targeted acquisition of parcels in Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) that are important to meet the long-term net benefit to rare species and preserve land with a high Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI). The CAPS analysis should be applied to potential mitigation sites to determine IEI scores. The selection of high IEI properties should consider properties that will not be adversely affected by direct or indirect impacts of the project, which would reduce IEI scores after construction. The FEIR should identify targeted sites for acquisition and describe in detail how the proposed land acquisition will offset direct and indirect impacts of the project, and further the smart growth aspects of the Corridor Plan.</p>	<p>Areas targeted for preservation are discussed in Section 4.16.10.3 of the FEIS/FEIR and are presented as Potential Land Preservation Opportunities in Table 4.16-56.</p> <p>MassDOT will mitigate impacts to wetlands and rare species as required by federal and state agencies. If mitigation sites are selected by the agencies within PPAs, MassDOT will fund acquisition as required. It is assumed that mitigation sites that will not be affected by direct or indirect impacts of the project will be selected by the agencies, and that these sites would have high IEI values.</p> <p>Section 4.14.3.4 provides a summary of the CAPS analysis. As discussed, the CAPS analysis is not an appropriate tool to evaluate proposed mitigation measures.</p> <p>Conceptual wetland mitigation plans are provided in Chapter 4.16. Until final mitigation sites are selected by the agencies it is not possible to describe how any required land acquisition will offset direct and indirect impacts of the South Coast Rail project. MassDOT will not acquire land to advance the smart growth aspects of the Corridor Plan.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.15	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Mitigation -Implementation of the smart growth Corridor Plan has the potential to mitigate environmental impacts and advance environmental preservation along the project corridor. The Corridor Plan presents an opportunity for an integrated approach to advance environmental protection strategies with land use planning that 1 ) optimizes economic and housing development, 2) contains sprawl, and 3) protects the integrity of critical natural resource habitats. The FEIR should include an analysis of how land acquisition can be optimized to accomplish these three goals. MassDOT should consult with EEA agencies to identify and protect areas critical to preserving the integrity of existing and valuable ecosystems. MassDOT should also partner with local Conservation Commissions and Planning Boards, regional planning agencies, and non-profit land trust/conservation organizations in a coordinated effort to adopt land preservation strategies that will stem wetland habitat fragmentation commonly associated with sprawl due to unconstrained development. The FEIR should clearly identify MassDOT's commitments to acquire land that meets the project's mitigation requirements and longer-tern smart growth goals.</p>	<p>MassDOT will be required by law to mitigate for any project impacts to wetlands or rare species, and MassDOT is committed to complying with the mitigation requirements established by the agencies involved in mitigation planning. MassDOT will not acquire land to meet the smart growth goals; that is a responsibility of the municipalities and other state agencies, as directed by Executive Order 525.</p>
L-088.16	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include a 2:1 ratio for BVW mitigation (at a minimum), at least 1:1 for all other wetlands. Where the Corps requires higher ratios (e.g. for forested wetlands), the mitigation plan should reflect the federal requirements also.</p>	<p>Mitigation ratios and total acreage goals were discussed with the ICG. Mitigation is proposed which meets or exceeds the goals presented in both state and federal guidance documents. During the final design phase, MassDOT would advance the design of these and potentially other mitigation sites and develop (in consultation with regulatory agencies) a final mitigation design package that provides at least 3:1 replacement of forested wetlands and 2:1 replacement of other lost wetland cover types and replacement of lost functions and values to satisfy the requirements of the USACE's Mitigation Rule. Impacts, ratios, and goals are discussed in Section 4.16.10.1 of the FEIS/FEIR. Evaluation of mitigation options and sites is discussed in Chapter 7.4.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.17	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include at least a 2:1 mitigation of rare species impacts subject to consultation with NHESP. In some areas mitigation requirements may be considerably higher-because this is a linear project that results in habitat fragmentation and may have disproportionate impacts on some species.	A Conservation and Management Plan to mitigate impacts to rare species is provided in Section 4.15.4 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-088.18	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include specific locations and design details for wildlife crossings.	Wildlife crossings at culvert and bridge locations will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing Standards, as described in Section 4.14.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR. Recommendations for specific locations are provided in Appendix 4.14-A. Design details will be developed during preliminary and final design. Additional wildlife crossings, consisting of tunnels and between-tie structures, will be sited at the locations identified in the figures in Chapter 4.14.
L-088.19	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include an evaluation of the feasibility of removing targeted portions of the existing rail bed that will not be used for the new rail line and evaluation of potential ecological benefits of railbed modification using the CAPS analysis. The mitigation plan should include a proposal for removal of portions that can be performed without adversely affecting adjacent wetland resources, including sensitive wetlands on either side of the berm.	Approximately 8,500 feet of the railroad bed within the Hockomock Swamp will be bridged by a trestle that will allow wildlife passage underneath. The railroad bed will not be removed here or at any other location, as removal would adversely affect the hydrology of the swamp. Existing culverts within the trestle segment will be daylighted in order to improve wildlife passage through these structures.
L-088.20	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - Mitigation plans should focus specifically on locations that would improve wildlife habitat and fish passage, increase connectivity, and reduce fragmentation (for example, at locations within the Hockomock Swamp where a trestle will replace the existing bed).	Wildlife crossings at culvert and bridge locations will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing Standards, as described in Section 4.14.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR. Recommendations for specific locations are provided in Appendix 4.14-A. Design details will be developed during preliminary and final design. Additional wildlife crossings, consisting of tunnels and between-tie structures, will be sited at the locations identified in the figures in Chapter 4.14. Wildlife passage will also be facilitated by the 8,500-foot long trestle over the Hockomock Swamp.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.21	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include an evaluation of potential for restoration/preservation of Atlantic White Cedar ( <i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i> ) wetlands.	The most likely restoration possibility for Atlantic white cedar ( <i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i> ) is located in Site G, the Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area. Mitigation proposed in Area C of this WMA consists of removing the berm around the existing cranberry bog and (if necessary) excavating to provide hydrology suitable for <i>C. thyoides</i> . Creation of this specific wetland habitat would require a detailed study of the target area and the hydrology of the surrounding area to ensure long-term success of the wetland. Proposed mitigation at Site G is presented in Section 4.16.10.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-088.22	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include topographic information and proposed improvements to existing stream crossings at site-specific locations to improve wildlife and fish passage.	The mitigation measures proposed in Section 4.14.3 of the FEIS/FEIR include recommendations for each culvert. Site-specific information such as topography and hydrology will be taken into consideration for each culvert and, as appropriate, replacements will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing general standards.
L-088.23	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include meaningful Riverfront Area improvements and/or restoration to mitigate for riverfront impacts.	Riverfront Area impacts are mostly associated with Wetland 62.1, the perennial stream in Raynham. This stream provides no functions other than drainage. The channel for the stream would be reconstructed in place and is discussed in Section 4.16.10 of the FEIS/FEIR. Further analysis is required to determine if any other impacts to Riverfront Area provide important wildlife habitat and would require compensatory mitigation.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.24	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include on-site elevation-specific compensatory storage for lost flood storage, or if such compensatory storage cannot be provided, demonstrate an insignificant increase in flooding. demonstrate that any incremental increase in flooding could be contained on the Proponent's property, or acquire flood easements.	A total of 13.1 acres of potential compensatory flood storage is proposed in the mitigation plan. MassDOT would commit to creating compensatory area necessary to satisfy required mitigation goals. Site-specific compensatory flood mitigation area could not be located at every site that experiences impact along the right-of-way. Agency members of the ICG focused on fewer mitigation parcels with larger compensatory flood storage mitigation potential. In final design, analysis of affected waterways would be undertaken to demonstrate that the proposed mitigation is sufficient or that there is an insignificant increase in flooding. Proposed mitigation for compensatory flood storage is discussed in Section 4.16.10 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-088.25	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include acquisition of land to meet the goals of advancing smart growth, providing long-term net benefit to rare species, and preserving high IEI land.	MassDOT will mitigate impacts to wetlands and rare species as required by federal and state agencies. It is assumed that mitigation sites that will not be affected by direct or indirect impacts of the project will be selected by the agencies, and that these sites would have high IEI values.
L-088.26	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include commitment to specific actions to implement the Corridor Plan and to work with communities to implement smart growth.	See Chapter 5.5 of the FEIS/FEIR for information on implementation of the Corridor Plan, including monitoring and reporting requirements.
L-088.27	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR mitigation plan should include wetland restoration within the Hockomock ACEC.	Site A and Site B are within the Hockomock ACEC, and wetland establishment is proposed at both sites. Proposed mitigation for these sites is presented in Sections 4.16.10 of the FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.28	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The FEIR should document with a high level of assurance that land identified for preservation, restriction, or replication/restoration to be taken by eminent domain can actually be acquired and will satisfy mitigation goals. As part of the assurances, additional mitigation areas should be identified as fall-back options in the event the primary mitigation goals are not achieved.	Owner information for each PPA site was not investigated for the current level of design. However, the number and size of sites in the PPA list provide numerous options if the initial sites chosen for preservation are not practicable. Sites in the PPA list have been divided into two groups, Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 sites have a higher potential to provide preservation opportunities. Tier 2 sites would be considered only if sufficient wetland preservation cannot be achieved from Tier 1 sites. The list of PPAs is presented in Table 4.16-56 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-088.29	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation - The draft mitigation plan presented in the FEIR should clearly identify the impacts to be mitigated, for example specific resources, functions and values, amounts and types of impacts etc. The plan should describe specific mitigation objectives and include an evaluation of mitigation options to determine which sites and mitigation measures perform best overall in terms of fulfilling mitigation objectives.	Impacts to be mitigated are discussed in Section 4.16.10.2 of the FEIS/FEIR along with mitigation replacement ratios and goals for total mitigation acreage. The discussion includes consideration of impacts to both state and federal resources. Impacts, ratios, and goals are discussed in Section 4.16.10.1 of the FEIS/FEIR. Evaluation of mitigation options and sites is discussed in Chapter 7.4.
L-088.30	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Endangered Species - MassDOT should consult with NHESP about the methodology to be used prior to any additional habitat analysis and to discuss metrics to be used in the FEIR for assessing impacts to state listed species and their habitat. MassDOT should also consult with NHESP regarding the assumptions related to vegetation cover that were used in the DEIR/S (Table 4.15-9). The analysis of impacts for the Stoughton route should be revised in the FEIR to reflect the full range of vegetation cover types that each state-listed species requires, as recommended by NHESP.	<p>At the direction of NHESP, MassDOT focused on the analysis of impacts to vegetation cover types that provide habitat to listed species: early successional upland, wetlands, vernal pools, aquatic habitats, and Atlantic white cedar swamps. See Section 4.15.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>MassDOT has consulted with NHESP concerning the habitat analysis and the impact analyses, as discussed in Section 4.15.3 of the FEIS/FEIR. At the direction of NHESP, MassDOT focused on the analysis of impacts to vegetation cover types that provide habitat to listed species: early successional upland, wetlands, vernal pools, aquatic habitats, and Atlantic white cedar swamps, as described in Section 4.15.4 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.31	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Endangered Species - The FEIR should include a detailed quantification of impacts to state-listed species, vernal pool habitat, general wildlife, and state-owned open space, and a detailed plan for minimization and mitigation of impacts. The FEIR should include a comprehensive description of how MassDOT proposes to meet MESA regulatory requirements, including the standards for authorizing a take of a state-listed species through a Conservation and Management Permit. The FEIR should include detailed descriptions and discussion of rare species and wildlife crossing and barrier design (for example, culverts and bridges) as well as other minimization measures, such as construction management to minimize turtle and salamander mortality. The FEIR should explain in detail how the project will meet the long-term "net benefit" standard in 321 CMR 10.23 including detailed mitigation plans that should be developed in consultation with NHESP. These mitigation plans should be at a very specific level of detail to demonstrate clearly that appropriate and effective mitigation will be implemented. The FEIR should also include a detailed plan for mitigation of vernal pool impacts. General wildlife impacts, and impacts to state-owned open space.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.15 of the FEIS/FEIR identifies the long- and short-term impacts to state listed species and habitats. As discussed in Section 4.15.3.1, MassDOT consulted with NHESP concerning analyses and methodology. Mitigation for impacts to vernal pool habitat, general wildlife, and state-owned open space are summarized in Section 4.14.3.6 Chapter 7.5 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>Section 4.15.2 of the FEIS/FEIR provides a comprehensive description of compliance with MESA regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Section 4.15.3 of the FEIS/FEIR provides a discussion of mitigation and minimization measures for impacts to sensitive species. Section 4.15.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR describes the wildlife crossings proposed for the Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>Section 4.15.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR provides a detailed description of how the project will meet the "net benefit" standard for each listed species. Mitigation plans are presented at a conceptual design stage, and would be refined during the final design process.</p>
L-088.32	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Endangered Species - The DEIR/S indicates there would be no impacts to species migration in areas of existing rail lines. However, the FEIR should include an evaluation of any potential impacts to migration associated with widening of the existing tracks and ROW.</p>	<p>Section 4.15.3 of the FEIS/FEIR evaluates the direct and indirect effects to state-listed species. The analysis documents that there would be no new effects to species migration associated with reconstructing the existing tracks. The right-of-way would not be widened. Section 4.15.3 of the FEIS/FEIR describes the proposed measures to enhance turtle movement across the right-of-way in these areas.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.33	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Fisheries - The DEIR/S identifies 34 river and stream crossings on the New Bedford main line and the Fall River Secondary, and 64 on the Stoughton line (on the abandoned railroad ROW). I refer MassDOT to NEHSP's comment letter which includes a list of species and fisheries survey results for rivers and streams in the project area. The FEIR should evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project to fishery resources, considering issues such as water quality. Flow changes in siltation, water level fluctuations, loss of riparian habitat and alterations of the temperature regime. As noted in NHESP's letter, stocked trout waters are highly susceptible to changes in water quality and/or quantity. The FEIR should explain how the project will be designed to avoid any adverse impacts to streams and rivers that support stocked trout. The FEIR should describe Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will be implemented for erosion and sedimentation control and propose time of year restrictions as appropriate to avoid and minimize impacts.</p>	<p>The fisheries information provided in Table 4.14-4 of the DEIS/DEIR has been updated for the Stoughton Alternative based on information provided by the DMF and DFW. As shown in Section 4.14.2 of the FEIS/FEIR, there are 34 freshwater, anadromous, or diadromous fish recorded from the waterways crossed by the Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>The only stocked trout water is Rattlesnake Brook. No work is proposed within or adjacent to the waterway at this location, as Rattlesnake Brook is below Route 24, which is bridged by the railroad. Section 4.14.3 of the FEIS/FEIR provides an evaluation of impacts to fish.</p> <p>Section 4.14.3.3 of the FEIS/FEIR addresses best management practices to minimize stormwater impacts to fisheries. The BMPs for erosion and sedimentation control are also described in detail in Section 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>
L-088.34	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Fisheries - The Division of Marine Fisheries included a list of Time of Year (TOY) restrictions for specific species in rivers and streams affected by the project. These restrictions are based on the recently released recommended TOY restrictions for coastal alteration projects to protect marine fisheries resources in Massachusetts. The FEIR should clarify commitments to TOY restrictions or demonstrate that they may not be required if construction is located outside the area used by diadromous species or uses methods that will not affect fish passage or use of spawning riffles. MassDOT should consult with the Division of Marine Fisheries to obtain the new maps of fish passage and spawning locations that are under development.</p>	<p>As discussed in Section 4.14.3.6, MassDOT would observe time-of-year restrictions for in-water work within the Assonet River, Taunton River, Cedar Swamp River, Cotley River, Mill River, and other waterways specified in Table 4.14-33. Division of Marine Fisheries has informed MassDOT that a mapping effort has been underway and a draft GIS layer summarizing this information will be made available when finalized.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.35	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Biodiversity - In addition to the biodiversity analysis required above relating to wetlands, endangered species, and fisheries, the FEIR should include the results of breeding bird surveys and other studies conducted to refine the wildlife impact assessment and mitigation plans. The mitigation plan should include time of year (toy) restrictions to project migratory birds, which are protected under the National Migratory Bird Treaty.	<p>No additional breeding bird surveys were found to be necessary, as sufficient information was available through reliable data. The list of breeding birds was updated (Section 4.14.2 of the FEIS/FEIR) and the refined impact analysis is presented in Section 4.14.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>Section 4.13.3 of the FEIS/FEIR identifies the time-of-year construction restrictions to protect migratory birds in sensitive habitats and addresses the National Migratory Bird Treaty.</p>
L-088.36	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Biodiversity - The FEIR should include a summary of the CAPS analysis of ecological integrity impacts associated with the proposed project and the results of additional analysis on the potential improvements in the Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI) as a result of proposed mitigation measures. The mitigation plans should describe MassDOT's commitments to specific enhancements in the Hockomock Swamp and other areas along the rail alignment, as well as commitments to biodiversity protection through land acquisition and conservation.	<p>Section 4.14.3 of the FEIS/FEIR provides a summary of the CAPS analysis. The analysis is also summarized in the Executive Summary, Chapter 1.</p> <p>Section 4.16.10 of the FEIS/FEIR describes the proposed mitigation measures for impacts to wetlands, including within the Hockomock Swamp. Mitigation measures for impacts to biodiversity are discussed in Section 4.14.3 of the FEIS/FEIR. MassDOT's mitigation commitments for impacts to all resources are provided in the Proposed Mitigation Measures and MassDOT Proposed Section 61 Findings chapter of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.37	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Open Space and Conservation Lands - Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA): The proposed Stoughton route uses an inactive railroad Right-of-way that crosses through the Hockomock Swamp WMA. The FEIR should include a detailed analysis of the project's potential impacts to open space within the Hockomock Swamp, including any impacts relating to infrastructure, such as access roads, for construction or ongoing maintenance of the trestle and railbed ROW. The FEIR should include a detailed plan to avoid and minimize impacts and/or to mitigate unavoidable impacts to open space. The FEIR should clarify whether proposed work falls within the existing ROW or to what degree it will extend beyond it.</p>	<p>Section 4.10 of the FEIS/FEIR describes potential impacts to the specific open space locations along the South Coast Rail alignment, including the Hockomock Swamp. Constructing and maintaining the trestle and ROW will not require an access road.</p> <p>Section 4.10.3 and Chapter 7, Mitigation, of the FEIS/FEIR describe the proposed mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts to open space. MassDOT is committed to compliance with the Article 97 Land Disposition Policy for acquisition of any land protected by Article 97.</p> <p>Proposed construction falls within the existing ROW except at the proposed stations and layover facilities, proposed transfer power substations, and proposed frontage road in Stoughton. There are a limited number of additional areas where narrow strips of land outside of the existing ROW will be required for grading. Property acquisition requirements for the current level of design are described in Section 4.2.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.38	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Open Space and Conservation Lands - Taunton Wild and Scenic River: The FEIR should include an update on consultations with the National Park Service regarding the status of Taunton River as a National Wild and Scenic River, and to discuss issues relating to water quality impacts from construction and stormwater runoff, rail line crossings of the Taunton and its tributaries, impacts to natural and cultural landscape features, selection and siting of layover facilities, and construction of the Fall River Depot station. The FEIR should describe impacts to Riverfront Area from the proposed layover facility in Fall River and discuss other possible sites outside of Riverfront Area as recommended by the Department of Interior in its comment letter.	<p>Potential impacts to the Taunton Wild and Scenic River are described in Section 4.10.3 and Section 4.10.4 of the FEIS/FEIR, including potential Impacts to Article 97 Lands and Other Open Space. Construction and operation of the bridges, station, and layover facility are not expected to impact the Taunton River's status within the Wild and Scenic River program. MassDOT has consulted with the National Park Service and provided requested information on bridges, the Weaver's Cove East layover facility, and the Fall River Depot Station in regard to potential impacts to the Taunton River's status as a Wild and Scenic River. Similarly, Section 4.10.4 provides a discussion of the bridge over the Mill River (a tributary to the Taunton River) and its potential impact on the Wild and Scenic River designation of the Taunton River. MassDOT has provided this analysis to the NPS as well. The project's potential impacts to water quality of the Taunton River are described in Section 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR. The project is not expected to adversely impact the river.</p> <p>Impacts to Riverfront Area are presented in Chapter 4.16. As described, there would be no impacts to Riverfront Area in Fall River.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.39	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Open Space and Conservation Lands - Acushnet Cedar Swamp National Natural Landmark - The FEIR should describe proposed measures to avoid and minimize construction and train operational noise impacts during critical wildlife breeding season in spring and early summer. The FEIR should also assess barrier effects to wildlife movement in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp and propose scheduling and/or other measures to minimize impacts to wildlife movement during project construction and operation.	<p>As noted in the FEIS/FEIR, Section 4.14.3, all efforts will be taken to avoid construction in sensitive wildlife habitats (the Hockomock Swamp, Pine Swamp, and the Acushnet Cedar Swamp) during the April through June breeding season for amphibians and birds.</p> <p>Section 4.14.3 of the FIES/FEIR discusses the barrier effects to wildlife movement in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp. The evaluation found that the existing railroad berm does not bisect an area of important wildlife habitat.</p> <p>As noted in the FEIS/FEIR and in Section 4.14.3, all efforts will be taken to avoid construction in sensitive wildlife habitats (the Hockomock Swamp, Pine Swamp, and the Acushnet Cedar Swamp) during the April through June breeding season for amphibians and birds.</p>
L-088.40	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Open Space and Conservation Lands - Acushnet Cedar Swamp National Natural Landmark - The FEIR should evaluate the potential for a hydrological connection between the Acushnet Cedar Swamp and the Church Street Layover facility site. The FEIR should clarify whether or not there is a connection, discuss the potential for runoff impacts to the Swamp, and describe proposed mitigation measures.	The Church Street layover site has been dismissed from further consideration; an evaluation of hydrologic connectivity is not needed.
L-088.41	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Article 97 und other Open Space - The open space impact estimates presented in the DEIR/S summary tables are limited to Article 97 land and are not representative of the full range of potential impacts to open space. The FEIR should quantify all open space impacted by the project and describe mitigation commitments. The FEIR should expand upon the evaluation in the DEIR/S to demonstrate consistency with the EEA Article 97 Land Disposition Policy. MassDOT should consult with the Department of Conservation and Recreation during FEIR preparation to discuss policy requirements and a land disposition agreement.	Quantification of open space impacts and a description of mitigation commitments is provided in Chapter 4.10. Regulatory compliance is summarized in Chapter 8. MassDOT will continue to coordinate with the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.42	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Layover Facilities - The FEIR should expand on the analysis of the proposed layover facilities with detailed plans for the layover facilities and a comparative analysis of environmental impacts with a summary table showing land alteration, impervious area, wetland and water quality impacts, traffic impacts, air quality, noise and vibration. impacts to conservation lands/open space, and impacts to Environmental Justice populations, The alternatives analysis should include consideration of potential sites outside of Riverfront Area. The FEIR should identify permits required for layover facilities and document how the proposed facilities will comply with applicable regulatory requirements. Consistency with Chapter 91 licensing requirements and requirements for location within a Designated Port Area (DPA) should be described as applicable. The FEIR should clarify whether any facility located in a DPA can be allowed as a temporary and/or supporting DPA use. The FEIR should clarify, and depict on figures/plans, any filled or flowed tidelands on or near the proposed layover facilities. Where applicable, information to support a Public Benefit Determination should be included.</p>	<p>The impacts of the proposed layover facilities are addressed throughout the EIS/EIR. A summary table specific to layover facilities is not necessary. Neither of the proposed layover facilities are in Riverfront Areas. Information on the environmental issues considered in the site selection process is documented in Appendix 3.2-E.</p>
L-088.43	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Layover Facilities - Proposed layover facilities contain resource areas including scrub shrub swamp and wooded swamp. The DEIR/S information should be supplemented with additional details on wetlands protection and stormwater management for the proposed sites. The FEIR should describe MassDOT's commitment to measures that will avoid and minimize impacts and/or mitigate for any unavoidable impacts. The FEIR should include a rationale for selection of the preferred layover facilities and for elimination of others from further consideration. The evaluation of impacts associated with layovers should include potential conflicts and synergies with existing and future land use on and in the vicinity of the sites.</p>	<p>Information on wetlands and stormwater management is provided in the FEIS/FEIR. Chapter 7 summarizes mitigation commitments.</p> <p>The area of the layover facility site must be large enough to accommodate the anticipated number of trains, service vehicles, and other support facilities. Each layover site chosen for South Coast Rail must be able to accommodate six tracks. The site selection sought to minimize environmental impacts and provide the most efficient operation that minimizes deadhead/non-revenue miles by locating the layover as close as possible to the terminal station. Additional rationale for the final layover facility sites selected is included in Section 3.2.16 of the FEIS/FEIR, and in Appendix 3.2-E: Layover Facility Site Selection report.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.44	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Layover Facilities - The DEIR/S indicates that the Weavers Cove East layover facility in New Bedford would substantially affect the visual environment for nearby residents and passers-by on the Taunton River. Similarly, the ISP layover facility would substantially impact the visual environment at its location, which is approximately six miles from the southern terminus of the Fall River Secondary line. The FEIR should include clear commitments to specific measures to minimize or mitigate visual impacts associated with proposed layover facilities.	The ISP site is no longer under consideration as a layover facility. Mitigation for the Weavers Cove East Layover Facility has not been fully developed and will be advanced during the design phase of the project. Mitigation to minimize visual impacts would likely include vegetated plantings that visually block or obstruct the facility from the residential view.
L-088.45	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Station sites and Transit-Oriented Design(TOD) - The FEIR should describe MassDOT's work with the City of New Bedford to develop a feeder bus system and discuss the additional benefits of the system including potential increases in ridership of the proposed South Coast Rail. The FEIR should also clarify the enhanced bus measures assumed as part of the No-Build scenario, which will be incorporated as part of the project. Several of the station designs do not include accommodations for feeder bus. The FEIR should explain this and consider measures to enhance shuttle/feeder bus service to the proposed stations.	<p>Three regional transit authorities, Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT), the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) and Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) currently provide local bus service to the SCR corridor. Potential route modifications to existing bus routes to integrate SCR and local bus services were identified to the extent possible. Section 3.2.8 of the FEIS/FEIR and Appendix 3.2-A Feeder Bus Service Analysis provide a discussion of the feeder bus system and potential benefits.</p> <p>Section 3.2.3 of the FEIS provides an updated description of the No-Build (Enhanced Bus) Alternative. Section 4.1.4.1, No-Build (Enhanced Bus) Alternative, of the DEIS/DEIR describes the impacts of this alternative, including background development and infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>Several stations do not have viable options for accommodating feeder bus service. Some of the reasons include seasonal ridership (Battleship Cove Station), no available bus systems (North Easton Station), and no nearby developments to which bus service could connect (Raynham Place station), and the Fall River Depot Station is planned for the former location of the Fall River Station, which is within convenient walking distance to the station platform assuming provision of an adequate pedestrian pathway. Measures to enhance service to the proposed stations are detailed in Section 3.2.3 of the FEIS.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.46	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Station sites and Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) - The FEIR should include additional information on station sites, including analysis of decked parking, Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD), and opportunities for greenhouse gas reductions as required by other sections of this Scope. The FEIR should include updated design plans for station sites with additional information on proposed Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The DEIR/S indicates that Battleship Cove Station would not operate year round. The FEIR should clarify the operating schedule for this station.	<p>Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) and Low Impact Development (LID) practices are incorporated into the design of proposed stations and parking facilities and are documented in Section 4.17.3. Decked parking was not cost effective at most station sites and is only proposed at the Fall River Depot station.</p> <p>Station plans have been advanced for only the commuter rail use at this time. MassDOT continues to provide technical assistance per Executive Order 505 to the South Coast region for TOD planning at the stations consistent with the Corridor Plan.</p> <p>The operations analysis for the project included Battleship Cove as a full-time commuter rail station to ensure full-time operation would be feasible. Whether Battleship Cove becomes a full-time or seasonal station has not yet been determined.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.47	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Station sites and Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) - The FEIR should include an update on the new 2010 Journey to Work (JTW) data and include a sensitivity analysis based on comparison of the more recent data with the 2000 data used for the ridership analysis. The FEIR should update the ridership estimates as applicable to account for any significant changes in JTW trends.	<p>Journey to Work data was not collected as part of the 2010 decennial U.S. Census. Instead, journey to work information is collected by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and reported in estimates based on multiple years of sample data. Appendix 2.2-A contains the 2011 CTPS memo regarding work trips to Boston based on the 2000 Census data and a 2013 CTPS memo discussing the 2006-2010 ACS journey to work data. An exact comparison of the 2000 Census and 2006-2010 ACS data is not possible because of changes in the level of geographic detail available. However, comparing the total work commutes to all of Boston shows an increase in commute trips between 2000 and 2010 of 8.9 percent. ACS data that currently has been released is limited to town level flows, does not include information regarding mode, and has a higher level of error associated with it due to data suppression and sample size.</p> <p>The 2030 ridership presented in the DIES/DEIR was updated for a 2035 projection year and revised land use assumptions (which incorporated 2010 Census population information).</p>
L-088.48	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Station sites and Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) - The FEIR should include additional detail on plans to support pedestrian and bicycle access. I refer the Proponent to comment letters from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), WalkBoston, and other commenters for their recommendations.	The South Coast Rail stations are all proposed to support full pedestrian and bicycle access. Chapter 4.1.5.2 provides specific detail for each station. See also Chapter 3 for pedestrian and bicycle access to project stations.
L-088.49	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Station sites and Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) - Some of the station designs include additional siding for freight traffic. The FEIR should clarify whether freight currently exists at these sites or not. and if there are any changes to existing freight routes as a result of the proposed project.	Accommodations for freight traffic have been made at each station site where freight currently operates. Changes to existing freight routes are not envisioned, and stations not on freight routes have not been designed to accommodate freight trains.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.50	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stormwater - The FEIR should describe how the project will comply with the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards for work proposed in wetland resource areas and buffer zones pursuant to 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6), as well as other state and federal requirements (including Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements) for stormwater discharges to existing outfalls and/or for the proposed layover facilities. The FEIR should describe measures to ensure that stormwater discharges to the Neponset River will meet the TMDL pathogen removal requirements and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) removal requirements	<p>Section 4.17.3 documents the ability of the project to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards without a variance. Section 4.17.3, provides a summary of how the project complies with the Standards.</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternative has been dismissed and is no longer under consideration. As a result, the project has no new discharges to the Neponset River or its tributaries. Stormwater discharges within the Neponset River watershed are limited to existing discharges to the municipal separate storm sewers at Canton Center and Stoughton Stations. These stations are described in Sections 4.17.3.</p>
L-088.51	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stormwater - The FEIR should include an assessment of the ability of the proposed project to meet the ten Massachusetts Stormwater Standards or specify if a variance to the standards specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6) may be required. For those components of the project where complete reuse of existing development is proposed, MassDOT should be fully meeting the Stormwater Standards rather than only "to the extent possible" as few constraints exist in such situations.	Section 4.17.3 documents the ability of the project to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards without a variance. Section 4.17.3, provides a summary of how the project complies with the Standards.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.52	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Stormwater - The FEIR should include a detailed evaluation of Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) and Low Impact Development (LID) practices to manage stormwater at proposed stations and parking areas, and layover facilities. The FEIR should identify the design capacity for parking at each station. Deck parking should be evaluated as an alternative to at-grade parking to minimize the project's impervious footprint and reduce the amount of land taking required. The ESSD and LID alternatives analysis in the FEIR should also include evaluation of smaller parking stalls and circulation lanes; porous pavement; pavement disconnection versus traditional curb and gutter drainage; retention of existing mature non-invasive plants; exfiltrating bioretention in place of raised traffic islands; and tree box filters. The FEIR should clearly identify the ESSD and LID measures to which the Proponent is committed to implement. For those measures not being committed to, the FEIR should include a sound rationale as to why they are not feasible.</p>	<p>Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) and Low Impact Development (LID) practices are incorporated into the design of proposed stations and parking facilities to the extent practicable and are documented in Section 4.17.3 6.</p> <p>As described in the Stormwater Management Standards section of the Regulatory Compliance chapter, ESSD techniques and LID features have been incorporated into the design of each station site and layover facility to the extent practical. ESSD techniques incorporated in the project include reducing impervious area by removing unnecessary pavement, maintaining existing drainage patterns, and maintaining existing mature vegetation. LID features include disconnecting runoff from impervious surfaces, using sheet flow and surface conveyances as opposed to closed drainage systems, promoting groundwater recharge through bioretention and infiltration basins. ESSD and LID measures that cannot be committed to are those that are either not cost effective, not practical, or not applicable to the stations or layover facilities.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.53	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stormwater - The FEIR should include information on stormwater peak runoff rates and whether attenuation requirements will be met. The FEIR should assess each station and layover site to determine if there is sufficient land available for attenuation structures or if any additional right-of-way purchase would be required. For those stations being upgraded, the FEIR should include an analysis and description of measures to meet stormwater standards to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) and to improve existing conditions. The FEIR should include an analysis of potential stormwater impacts to critical areas including vernal pools, and how these impacts will be addressed.	<p>Detailed stormwater calculations, including peak runoff and pollutant removal rates, were completed for all station sites, layover facilities, and track drainage elements with significant new impervious area. These rates are presented for each station and layover sites (Sections 4.17.3.5 and 4.17.3.6. Supporting calculations are provided in the stormwater reports in Appendices 4.17-A through C.</p> <p>Sufficient land is available at each station site to accommodate the required stormwater BMPs, as shown in 4.17.3.6. One existing station is proposed to be upgraded (Canton Center, as described in Section 4.17.3). The only improvement at this location would be to relocate the existing platform, with no increase in paved areas.</p> <p>Compliance with the requirements for discharges to stormwater critical areas are addressed in the evaluation of each station, trestle and layover site in Section 4.17.3.3. Potential impacts to vernal pools are described in Section 4.14.3. The project has been designed to avoid discharges to critical areas.</p>
L-088.54	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Stormwater - The FEIR should include details on proposed stormwater management along the proposed rail tracks. As noted in MassDEP's comment letter, the Greenbush rail line included an extensive drainage system. The FEIR should describe the proposed drainage design for the Stoughton rail line and demonstrate that sufficient treatment will be provided prior to any discharge of track drainage runoff to resource areas. The FEIR should include a detailed description of the proposed stormwater management system for all components of the project. I refer MassDOT to additional guidance regarding stormwater management in MassDEP's comment letter.	<p>Chapter 4.17 provides a detailed description of proposed measures to convey and treat stormwater along the proposed and existing rail tracks.</p> <p>Detailed descriptions of the proposed stormwater management system for each element of the project are included.</p> <p>Responses to MassDEP comments are provided in this response to comments volume of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.55	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Coastal Zone - The proposed Whale's Tooth Station in New Bedford is located within the coastal zone. The FEIR should include measures to avoid and minimize non-point source pollution from idling trains and should describe how the station site will be designed to be compatible with existing industrial uses in the New Bedford/Fairhaven Designated Port Area (DPA). The Wamsutta layover alternative is located adjacent to the Whales' Tooth Station site and the DPA. The FEIR should address compatibility issues with regard to coastal zone protection and DPA uses as recommended by CZM.	<p>Chapter 4.18 describes measures used at the proposed Whale's Tooth Station (and other facilities within the Coastal Zone) to avoid and minimize non-point source pollution. As discussed in Section 4.4, Consistency with Designated Port Areas, of the Report, the Whale's Tooth Station is not within the DPA.</p> <p>The chapter also describes measures used at the proposed Wamsutta Layover Facility (and other facilities within the Coastal Zone) to avoid and minimize non-point source pollution. Wamsutta Layover is not within the DPA.</p>
L-088.56	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Coastal Zone - The proposed stations in Fall River are located near the Mount Hope Bay DPA and the Fall River station is partially located within the coastal zone. The proposed Fall River layover sites are located within the coastal zone. In consideration of future sea level rise, the FEIR should consider a margin of safety to avoid a facility being located in a future elevated Zone A floodplain. The FEIR should address pollution prevention and LID at all station and layover sites as well as project consistency with DPA uses and the Fall River City's harbor planning goals for pedestrian reconnection to the Waterfront. The FEIR should also address nitrogen deposition in coastal embayments more explicitly, as requested by CZM in its comment letter.	<p>Chapter 4.18 addresses planning for sea level rise. As described in the DEIS/DEIR, it is not practicable to locate the proposed stations and layover facilities at higher or more inland locations due to the location of the existing railroad infrastructure and the location of the populations being served.</p> <p>Section 4.18.6.5, subsection on the Fall River Harbor and Downtown Economic Development Plan, discusses the project's consistency with the City of Fall River's harbor planning goals.</p> <p>The electric locomotives proposed under the Stoughton Electric or Whittenton Electric Alternatives do not emit air pollutants and would not have any air quality impacts on coastal embayments.</p> <p>The air quality analysis demonstrated that the aerial deposition of diesel engine train emissions is not a substantial source of pollution of water resources (coastal embayments) because of the very low concentrations of pollutants in the vicinity of the train track</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.57	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Chapter 91 Licensing and Public Benefits Determination - MassDOT should consult with MassDEP and provide more detailed plans to determine whether or not the filled tidelands at Fall River Battleship Cove Station, New Bedford Whale's Tooth Station, and Wamsutta Layover facility are considered landlocked tidelands as defined at 301 CMR 9.02. The FEIR should include analysis and mitigation as applicable to support a Public Benefits Determination consistent with Chapter 168 of the Acts of 2007. The FEIR should describe any public access restrictions to the shoreline that may result from construction of layover facilities or other components of the proposed project. Mitigation plans should be included in the FEIR to compensate for any public access impacts.	<p>MassDOT has consulted with MassDEP concerning Chapter 91 jurisdiction. Chapter 4.18 presents the results of this analysis, which demonstrates that the Battleship Cove Station, Whale's Tooth Station, and Wamsutta Layover Facility are within landlocked tidelands.</p> <p>The chapter provides information in support of a Public Benefits Determination.</p> <p>The re-construction of the existing railroad infrastructure will not affect public access to the shoreline. In accordance with FRA safety regulations, the active railroad right-of-way is not open to the public. Construction of the proposed Weaver's Cove East Layover Facility will not affect public access to the Taunton River shoreline. Existing bridges in Fall River over roads that provide shoreline access will be reconstructed to maintain access. Because the proposed project will not have an adverse effect on public access, no mitigation is proposed.</p>
L-088.58	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Chapter 91 Licensing and Public Benefits Determination - A Mandatory Public Benefits Determination is required if the project is completely or partially located in tidelands or landlocked tidelands. The FEIR should include detailed information describing the nature of the tidelands affected and the public benefits of the proposed project in accordance with the Public Benefits Determination requirements at 301 CMR 13.00.	Chapter 4.18 provides information in support of a Public Benefits Determination.
L-088.59	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Chapter 91 Licensing and Public Benefits Determination - MassDEP indicates in its comment letter that the layover facilities at Weavers Cove and the ISP off North Main Street are located on filled tidelands. MassDEP has established the presumptive line of jurisdiction. MassDOT, if intending to rebut this presumption, should consult with MassDEP prior to submission of an FEIR and provide MassDEP with the information outlined in its comment letter. The FEIR should include an update on consultations and jurisdictional determinations.	<p>Chapter 4.18 and associated figures in Volume II provide information on filled tidelands at the proposed Weaver's Cove East Layover Facility. The Weaver's Cove West and ISP sites have been dismissed from further consideration.</p> <p>Chapter 4.18 provides an update on agency consultations. Updated jurisdictional determinations are included.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.60	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Chapter 91 Licensing and Public Benefits Determination - The FEIR should identify and describe all components of the project requiring Chapter 91 licensing and whether project components are considered water-dependent or non-water dependent. The FEIR should describe in detail how the project will meet licensing standards at 310 CMR 9.54 and 9.55 (for non water-dependent) and 301 CMR 9.3 1 - 9.40 (for water dependent). The FEIR should explain how the project is consistent with the New Bedford and Fall River Municipal Harbor Plans pursuant to 310 CMR 9.34, including for example, how intermodal connection to the ferry service would be achieved. The FEIR should explain how railroad components subject to licensing will preserve or enhance navigational capacity and maintain or enhance public access pursuant to 310 CMR 9.35 and 9.36. If navigation or public access is impacted by the project, the FEIR should include detailed mitigation plans. The FEIR should explore opportunities on or near the layover facilities where MassDOT can "take reasonable measures to provide open space for active or passive recreation at the water's edge" pursuant to 310 CMR 9.55(2).	<p>Chapter 4.18 provides information on all components of the project requiring Chapter 91 licensing, and whether they are water-dependent.</p> <p>Chapter 4.18 provides detailed information on how the project would meet Chapter 91 Licensing standards.</p> <p>The chapter also describes how the project is consistent with the New Bedford and Fall River Municipal Harbor Plans (only New Bedford has an official MHP). Intermodal connections from the Whale's Tooth Station to the New Bedford ferry terminal would be provided by the local transit authority.</p>
L-088.61	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Air Quality and Climate - The FEIR should include an evaluation of alternative fuels for the Enhanced Bus and feeder bus services and commit to use of hybrid and/or other fuels to minimize emission of air pollutants to the maximum extent feasible.	<p>While the use alternative fuels in existing bus service could improve the air quality performance of the No-Build Alternative, it would not change the conclusion that the No-Build Alternative does not meet the transportation need for the project.</p> <p>In addition, any enhanced bus under the No-Build or feeder bus service under the Build alternatives would not be within the direct control of MassDOT, therefore it would be reasonable for the environmental analysis to assume alternative fuels would be used by local bus operators.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.62	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Air Quality and Climate - The Stoughton Electric alternative, as noted in the DEIR/S review above, is the preferred alternative and provides the best overall emission reductions for VOC, NOx, PM10, PM2.5 and CO2 in comparison to the other alternatives evaluated. The commitments to construction-related mitigation measures should be reiterated in the FEIR as part of comprehensive mitigation plan.	Construction-related air quality mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter 4.9 and Chapter 7.
L-088.63	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	GHG and Climate Change - The DEIR/S did not include an analysis of stationary source GHG emissions and mitigation indicating that there would be no buildings at the stations, only platforms. However, there are other ways in which MassDOT can achieve GHG reductions, for example by using energy efficient interior and exterior parking lot lighting and use of solar photovoltaic energy. The DEIR/S indicates that the MBTA will explore renewable energy technologies at station sites; this should be evaluated in the FEIR/S. The FEIR should identify design and operational features that MassDOT will commit to implementing in order to reduce GHG emissions. including measures to promote reduction of GHG emissions associated with TOD facilities and other induced growth. MassDOT should consult with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Division of Green Communities during preparation of the FEIR for assistance in developing a joint approach to promote energy efficiency and GHG reduction in the south coast rail communities. DOER has also recommended that MassDOT consult with utility companies to explore ways that communities can avail themselves of incentives that could be used to mitigate GHG emissions related to induced growth. The FEIR should include an update on consultations and an outline of the proposed mitigation plan.	<p>The stations will not include GHG sources that would be under the control of MassDOT. The smart growth measures described in the Corridor Plan are intended, in part, to reduce GHG emissions from induced growth, but are similarly not part of the South Coast Rail project. Table 5.5-1 of Section 5.5 identifies the metrics that MassDOT will use to monitor performance of the Corridor Plan, and includes GHG-related metrics such as the number of buildings that are LEED-certified and the VMT travelled per capita within 1 mile of a station.</p> <p>MassDOT has not consulted further with the DOER Division of Green Communities or utility companies at this early planning stage of the project. However, a commitment to consult with DOER during final design is included in Chapter 7. Selection of the Stoughton Electric Alternative over the Stoughton Diesel Alternative would reduce GHG emissions from the project, and the reduction of VMT which would result from the project under any alternative would further reduce GHGs. No further GHG mitigation measures are proposed.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.64	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>GHG and Climate Change - The project overall is expected to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and GHG reductions are expected as a result of emission rules for mobile sources and the proposed smart growth plan. As indicated in the DEIR/S, the transportation model is being updated to reflect the reallocation of induced jobs into different transportation zones for future impact analyses of induced jobs in the context of traffic and GHG emissions. The FEIR should include the results of analysis of induced growth impacts on traffic and air quality. The FEIR should describe in detail specific commitments that MassDOT will make to contribute towards VMT and related GHG reductions through the proposed feeder bus system. The FEIR should provide more detailed information on a proposed feeder/shuttle bus network with frequent and convenient local bus linkages that will enhance local and intra-regional access to the proposed stations. MassDOT should work in cooperation with the regional transit authorities to further develop this plan. The feeder bus system should accommodate riders with bikes and the stations should provide adequate bicycle racks and storage and provide space and support for other programs that allow train riders to pick up bikes at one location and drop them off elsewhere. MassDOT should design this project as a flagship for implementation of its GreenDOT program.</p>	<p>MassDOT will coordinate with regional bus service providers to recommend route and service improvements for the proposed feeder bus system but, as these operators are outside the control of MassDOT, cannot make commitments towards VMT and related GHG reductions on their behalf. The feeder bus plan is included in Appendix 3.2-A.</p>
L-088.65	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Noise and Vibration - The FEIR should include a detailed evaluation of those locations that will experience moderate and severe noise impacts as a result of the project and commitments to specific mitigation measures. The evaluation should address noise impacts relating to all aspects of the project including train operations and horn noise, and noise associated with stations and layover facilities.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.6 provides the requested information.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.66	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Noise and Vibration - The DEIR/S indicates that mitigation will be provided for severe impacts where it is cost effective. The Proponent is required to mitigate for noise-related impacts and the cost effectiveness limitation may be problematic, as is the proposed lack of mitigation for moderate impacts. MassDOT should consult with MassDEP and the Interagency Coordinating Group for guidance on development of the noise mitigation plan. The FEIR should include a detailed mitigation plan with commitments to an appropriate level of mitigation for project-related noise impacts. The FEIR should document how the project will comply with MassDEP air quality regulations and Noise Policy.	<p>Chapter 4.6 provides the requested information, including a noise mitigation plan and information on compliance with the MassDEP noise policy.</p> <p>The MBTA noise mitigation policy (including cost effectiveness criteria) is used to provide consistent treatment to all noise impacted locations, across projects and geographies. The policy is consistent with FTA guidance, the federal agency with expertise in transit noise assessment and mitigation. Mitigation for moderate impacts is not required under the FTA noise and vibration guidance manual.</p>
L-088.67	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Noise and Vibration - The DEIR/S compares vibration impacts experienced by receptors against the 80 VdB FTA criteria for human annoyance. The FEIR should compare the estimated vibration levels to existing conditions and describe the actual change that will be experienced. This additional information should be provided for residential impacts along the Stoughton route as well as for historic buildings. The DEIR/S discusses possible mitigation measures. The FEIR should include a mitigation plan with clear and specific commitments to address vibration impacts and an explanation of the reductions in VdB levels expected.	<p>Section 3.2 of the Noise and Vibration Mitigation Plan describes the updated vibration impacts analysis. The analysis is based on FTA vibration impact criteria, which uses a relationship between train speed and the distance that vibration may propagate, rather than a comparison to existing vibration levels. It would not be practicable or informative to the decision making process to monitor existing vibration levels, given that such levels are not determinative in the impact analysis (unlike noise where the measured/estimated existing noise level influences whether or not a receptor is impacted). General information on existing vibration levels is provided in Table 4.7-1.</p> <p>It is extremely rare for vibration from train operations to cause any sort of building damage, even minor cosmetic damage. The vibration threshold for minor cosmetic damage, such as possible cracks in plaster walls, is 100 VdB for fragile buildings, and 90 VdB for extremely fragile historic buildings. These levels are not expected to occur at any receptor location along the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives.</p> <p>The vibration mitigation plan is provided in Chapter 4.7.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.68	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Environmental Justice - The FEIR should include a list of specific mitigation commitments to address noise and vibration impacts to Environmental Justice neighborhoods. The FEIR should also include an update on the investigation of potential adverse effects on any traditional cultural properties of significance to Native American Tribes. The FEIR should clarify if there will be a disproportionate adverse impact to an Environmental Justice community with regard to traditional cultural properties, and if so, what mitigation will be implemented.	Information on noise and vibration impacts and mitigation for environmental justice communities is provided in Chapter 4.7.  Issues pertaining to traditional cultural properties are addressed in Chapter 4.8.
L-088.69	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Environmental Justice - The DEIR/S projects potential financial impacts to Environmental Justice communities in Fall River as a result of property acquisition. The FEIR should specify how such impacts will be mitigated as part of the project. The DEIR/S also acknowledges that Environmental Justice communities may be negatively affected by increased property values in their neighborhood as a result of the South Coast Rail project. The FEIR should include further discussion and specific commitments on how this will be addressed (for example, through clear commitments to affordable housing as part of the project's station TOD plans, or other measures).	As described in Chapter 4.4, property acquisitions will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policy Act. MassDOT does not propose to mitigate for any other adverse financial impacts or indirect displacements that may occur, as the project is expected to generate new jobs in the vicinity of the station.
L-088.70	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Environmental Justice - MassDOT should continue its outreach program during FEIR preparation and encourage the participation of those Environmental Justice neighborhoods and residences specifically affected by the proposed project. The FEIR should include an update on MassDOT's outreach efforts to Environmental Justice populations.	Chapter 4.4 describes the outreach efforts to Environmental Justice communities, including planned consultation with building owners that may be adversely affected by increases in noise.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.71	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Cultural Resources - The FEIR should include an update on historical and archaeological studies conducted since the DEIR/S and an update on consultations with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and local historic board and societies. The figures in the FEIR should show locations of historic architectural resources in the context of the project and its Area of Potential Effect. The FEIR should address potential conflicts with proposed station parking at the site of the historic H.H. Richardson train station in Easton and address local concerns relating to visual and cultural resource impacts. The FEIR should evaluate mitigation opportunities, including repairs and rehabilitation, for the historic train station in Stoughton.	<p>Updated information cultural resource studies and coordination is provided in Chapter 4.8. Figures provided in the FEIS/FEIR show the historic resources within the APE.</p> <p>MassDOT met with representatives of Easton Historical Society on February 17, 2012 about the historic Easton Village H.H. Richardson Train station.</p> <p>The historic Stoughton Station has been declared surplus by the MBTA and plans to sell the station are underway. The sale will include a protective covenant.</p>
L-088.72	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Cultural Resources - The FEIR should expand on the analysis provided in the DEIR/S with a detailed mitigation plan for impacts to significant historical and archaeological resources. The FEIR should include an update on consultations with Native American Tribes and describe potential impacts to properties of significance to the tribes. The FEIR should include commitments to specific mitigation measures for any significant cultural impacts.	The requested information is provided in Chapter 4.8.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.73	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Traffic and Public Safety - Many commenters expressed concerns regarding the proposed at-grade crossings for the rail line and the potential for increased accidents. The FEIR should evaluate the potential for increases in accident rates as a result of proposed crossings and identify specific measures, and the effectiveness of such measures. to protect public safety to the maximum extent feasible. The FEIR should evaluate potential safety impacts in the context of EEA' s Environmental Justice Policy. Traffic congestion and potential delays in emergency services were also raised as concerns in the comment letters received, as were construction-related impacts to existing rail services. The FEIR should respond to these comments and include details of any mitigation proposed. The traffic mitigation plans in the DEIR/S should be revised as necessary based on further analysis for the Stoughton Electric alternative and included in the FEIR.	Further analysis of at-grade crossings, including a quantitative incident prediction analysis, is provided in Chapter 4.1.
L-088.74	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan - The DEIR/S should include an update on the status of implementation of the Corridor Plan and explain how it wilt be implemented in parallel with the proposed rail and station development to ensure appropriate timing of mitigation and to optimize the smart growth potential of the project.	Implementation of the Corridor Plan is addressed in Section 5.5.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.75	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Long-Term Smart Growth Evaluation and Environmental Stewardship Plan - MassDOT should consult with the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) and set up a workgroup in conjunction with the ICG to develop the methodology and process for this component of the FEIR. MassDOT should explore existing models and performance metrics used to evaluate the effectiveness of smart growth plans and environmental protection strategies, and include a summary in the FEIR of experience from other regions that may be useful to apply in the case of this project. MassDOT should work with EEA, ICG, regional planning agencies, and local communities, to develop evaluation indicators and metrics tailored to the South Coast Rail project. The evaluation plan should include a monitoring component to assess the accuracy of impact projections and allow for mid-course corrections and adaptive strategies as needed. The FEIR should propose a mechanism for periodic reporting out to the public and other agencies on MassDOT's progress in achieving the smart growth and environmental goals of the project, including its commitments to protection of ecologically significant habitat.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Corridor Plan is addressed in Section 5.5. The monitoring and reporting plans were developed consistent with the recommendations of the comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.76	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	<p>Long-Term Smart Growth Evaluation and Environmental Stewardship Plan - The DEIR/S describes anticipated smart growth and environmental benefits of the proposed project. MassDOT should describe in the FEIR how potential impacts and benefits will be monitored and measured. Metrics to consider for the Smart Growth Evaluation and Environmental Stewardship Plan include spatial metrics based on data that can be integrated with GIS mapping to compare 2020, 2025, and 2030 conditions against the baseline and Build without smart growth (business as usual scenarios) to evaluate benefits in reducing sprawl and to identify areas for improvement. Other smart growth metrics to consider include: the percentage of new development acreage located in PDAs; the percentage of PPAs left undeveloped and permanently protected; the number of developments meeting TOD, LEED neighborhood design or EESD standards; increasing shift of commuters from automobile to transit (riders and VMT reductions); change in IEI value of impacted areas and mitigation sites: the amount of land subject to transfer of development rights (TDR); and GHG emission reduction achievements of facilities in TOD areas.</p> <p>Implementation of the South Coast Rail Economic and Land Use Corridor Plan is expected to achieve various socio-economic benefits that could be monitored over time to evaluate the effectiveness of plan implementation. For example, the DEIR/S discusses environmental justice communities and related transit equity citing benefits the project will provide in terms of access to jobs, education and other services. The long-term evaluation plan should include metrics to evaluate how effective the project is in furthering social equity and environmental justice within the south coast communities.</p>	Refer to Section 5.5.2 for the complete list of performance metrics.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.77	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation and Section 61 Findings - The FEIR should expand upon the smart growth implementation plan as outlined above. The FEIR should include details on the proposed measures, roles and responsibilities, and MassDOT's commitments to implement specific measures to promote smart growth and achieve the mitigation and environmental benefits described in the DEIR/S. The FEIR should discuss the mitigation planning and outreach process conducted during FEIR preparation.	Refer to Section 5.5.
L-088.78	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation and Section 61 Findings - The FEIR should include revised Section 61 Findings for all state agency permits that reflect the detailed mitigation commitments to be provided in the FEIR. GHG commitments and related self-certification language should be included in the draft Section 61 Findings for MassDEP permitting.	Revised Draft Section 61 findings are provided in Chapter 7.
L-088.79	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Mitigation and Section 61 Findings - The FEIR should include a separate chapter on mitigation measures, which should include a summary table of all mitigation commitments as well as the revised Section 61 Findings. The Section 61 Findings should describe proposed mitigation measures, contain clear commitments to mitigation and a schedule for implementation, and identify parties responsible for funding and implementing the mitigation measures. The draft Section 61 Findings will serve as the primary template for permit conditions. Final Section 61 Findings will be included with all state permits issued for this project and will include conditions considered binding upon the proponent as mitigation commitments.	The requested information is provided in Chapter 7.
L-088.80	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Responses to Comments - In order to ensure that the issues raised by commenters are addressed, the FEIR should include responses to comments to the extent they are within MEPA jurisdiction. This directive is not intended to, and shall not be construed to, enlarge the scope of the FEIR beyond what has been expressly identified in this Certificate. The FEIR should also include a copy of this Certificate and a copy of each comment letter received on the DEIR/S.	Volume III of the FEIS/FEIR includes copies of all the comments received and responses to substantive comments.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-088.81	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	Circulation - The FEIR should be circulated in compliance with Section 11.16 of the MEPA regulations and copies should be sent to the list of "comments received" below. A copy of the FEIR should be made available for public review at the Public Libraries in the South Coast region municipalities. I commend MassDOT on its public outreach efforts to date and encourage continued public engagement during FEIR preparation and review.	Commenters on the DEIS/DEIR were added to the distribution list for the FEIS/FEIR.
L-088.82	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office	MassDOT should consult with the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) for input on a draft mitigation plan including the methodology to identify appropriate mitigation for fragmentation impacts and the analysis of mitigation opportunities in the context of fulfilling mitigation objectives. MassDOT should expand its outreach efforts during FEIR preparation to obtain public input on draft mitigation plans.	<p>Coordination with the ICG was conducted to refine the impact analyses and development of mitigation measures.</p> <p>No public outreach on mitigation plans was conducted by MassDOT during the preparation of the FEIS/FEIR, but the plans will be subject to public review as part of this document.</p>



## **State Agencies**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-089.01	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	DCR is highly supportive of the goals of this project to improve access and mobility to underserved communities of Southeast Massachusetts. Providing efficient rail service will have environmental benefits in air quality, carbon reduction and traffic congestion for this fast growing region. Well-located stations will provide new and improved transportation access to several DCR state parks benefiting communities beyond this region.	Thank you for your comment.
L-089.02	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	DCR is pleased to note that the Rapid Bus Alternative has been modified to avoid impacts to the Blue Hills Reservation. Elimination of the Middleboro Alternative has alleviated potential for impacts to Morrissey Boulevard and Furnace Brook Parkway.	Thank you for your comment.
L-089.03	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The New Bedford Main Line forms the eastern boundary of the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation. This state reservation was designated in 1972 by the National Park Service as a National Natural Landmark. The New Bedford Main Line is currently an active freight line, and the addition of passenger service is expected to have no significant adverse affects on the resources of the state reservation. Required track improvements will be an opportunity to positively improve conditions, particularly water quality, through incorporation of storm water Best Management Practices (BMPs.)	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-089.04	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The proposed State Pier Station would be located adjacent to the New Bedford State Fishing Pier, the Freetown Station would be near to Freetown-Fall River State Forest, and the Battleship Cove Station would be adjacent to Fall River Heritage State Park. DCR supports the proposed rail stations, because the locations will provide opportunities to enhance public access to these DCR-managed facilities. DCR would like to coordinate with the proponent and the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to develop public access strategies as the Project design progresses and to avoid through design, conflicts between park access parking needs and commuter parking.	MassDOT will keep Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation informed during the final design of stations that provide access to DCR-managed facilities.
L-089.05	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The DEIR describes wetland impacts approximately 2 acres (1.74 acres permanent and 0.57 acres temporary) within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC. Table 3.3-18 evaluates these impacts against impacts of other alternatives and assigns letter grades. The ACEC Program recommends that letter grades be eliminated as they may underestimate the wetlands impacts in the Hockomock Swamp and recommends that the FEIR focus on further defining the criteria and impacts discussed in the DEIR Biodiversity chapter.	The letter grades have been eliminated and impact analyses refined as requested.
L-089.06	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	To minimize wetlands impacts and allow for wildlife migration and connectivity between the wetlands currently bisected by the existing berm, a 1.8 mile trestle through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC is proposed for the Stoughton Alternative. Because of its significance as a mitigation feature, the engineering feasibility of the trestle on wetlands soils should be more fully explored in the FEIR.	Refer to the Hockomock Swamp Technical Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C)

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-089.07	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	<p>The ACEC Program believes the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives have high cumulative impact to biodiversity due to their impacts on rare species, Priority Natural Communities (Atlantic White Cedar), and their fragmentation of habitat and wildlife populations. As a complex ecosystem, impacts can be amplified due to the high inter-connectivity of resources and habitats.</p> <p>As noted above, the Hockomock Swamp has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, that supports neo-tropical migrant songbirds, as well as breeding populations of species particular to forest interiors, thus sensitive to impacts to connectivity The CAPS (the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System) analysis in (Appendix 4.14.) (UMass Amherst) a GIS-based coarse filter analysis of potential impacts to biodiversity, states that “Overall, the two routes through Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity” (p. 7).</p> <p>As stated in the DEIR, “although partially mitigated by the Hockomock Swamp Trestle, using this railroad bed would affect the connectivity of adjacent habitats and reduce their overall biodiversity value.” (p. 4.10-64). The DEIR states that constructing the rail bed within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC will require removing the forest canopy over the corridor and “This gap will divide the Hockomock Swamp south of Foundry Street into two units of approximately 3,201 acres west of the rail line and 682 acres east of the rail.” (p. 4.14-84). The DEIR also states that “large forest blocks...to support successfully reproducing populations of area-sensitive forest-interior nesters ...must be over 500 acres. Several studies suggest that 750 to 1,200 acres are necessary, and that even larger areas in excess of 7,500 acres are optimal.” If the Stoughton and/or Whittenton Alternatives are forwarded to the FEIR/FEIS, the ACEC Program requests the Proponent propose any additional methods to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these impacts to biodiversity.</p>	Mitigation for biodiversity impacts is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.14.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-089.08	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The ACEC Program notes that the Hockomock Swamp ACEC was designated in part for the system of interconnected surface and ground waters and the high and medium yield aquifers that supply public drinking water. At the time of designation two public supply wells for the Town of Raynham and one for the Town of West Bridgewater were located within the ACEC, and potential municipal well sites had been identified in the Towns of Bridgewater, Easton, and Raynham. The ACEC Program suggests that further review be included in the FEIR especially for rail intersections with Zone IIs.	The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives will not affect drinking water supplies, see Chapter 4.17.
L-089.09	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The ACEC Program requests stream crossings and culverts be evaluated against the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards, including maximizing hydrologic connections between wetlands for enhancement and restoration as well as for flood capacity. Climate change calculations should also be incorporated that are consistent with the most current guidelines for DOT and for federal permitting. Riverfront area impacts should be quantified and avoided, minimized or mitigated.	Chapter 4.14, Section 4.14.3.6, describes how culverts would be replaced in accordance with the Stream Crossing Standards. Appendix 14.4-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory, identifies the specific culvert replacement locations. All new bridges or replaced culverts bridges will be designed to meet the Standards where such design is not constrained by engineering requirements. Specific construction details will be developed in final design.
L-089.10	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The ACEC Program requests stormwater management plans should use Best Management Practices (“BMPs”) and Low Impact Development (“LID”) to mitigate discharges of potential pollutants and sediments into wetlands within ACECs and hydrological connections to ACECs.	Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) and Low Impact Development (LID) practices are incorporated into the design of proposed stations and parking facilities and are documented in Section 4.17.3.
L-089.11	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The ACEC Programs requests all permanent wetland impacts should include a preference for mitigation via restoration.	Wetlands restoration was considered in the evaluation of potential mitigation sites, see Chapter 4.16.
L-089.12	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	This proposed new station should minimize impervious area to avoid further land alteration in a heavily altered area adjacent to Hockomock Swamp. The Proponent should explore features such as structured parking, and BMPs for stormwater management.	The stormwater management system for Raynham Park Station is described on page 4.17-53. The station site design incorporates LID features and results in a 0.5-acre reduction in impervious area as compared to existing conditions.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-089.13	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The ACEC Program commends DOT in the production of the Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan ("Corridor Plan") with locally identified Priority Development Areas ("PDAs") and Priority Protection Areas ("PPAs"). The ACEC Program supports a targeted implementation program. The FEIR should detail these commitments as part of the mitigation plan as well as a long-term monitoring and evaluation plan to gauge the success of smart growth.	Implementation of the corridor plan, including monitoring and reporting measures, is addressed in Section 5.5.
L-089.14	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation	The DEIR states that "The Rapid Bus Alternative is not anticipated to adversely affect biodiversity in the Hockomock Swamp ACEC other than a small loss of habitat immediately adjacent to the existing Route 24." (p. 4.10-50) The Rapid Bus Alternative would result in approximately 4 acres of permanent wetlands impact and 3.19 acres of temporary wetlands impact within the Hockomock Swamp ACEC along the edges of wetlands already impacted by Route 24. The ACEC Program notes Best Managements Practices ("BMPs") for stormwater management could minimize any stormwater impacts to ACECs and hydrological connections to them.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
L-076.01	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	While the US Army Corp of Engineers has narrowed the definition of the project's purpose to meeting its public transportation demand and regional mobility components, MassDEP believes the project's potential to influence more sustainable growth patterns in this expanding region is relevant in considering its potential environmental impact in the context of MEPA review.	While not part of the USACE's basic project purpose, potential smart growth effects were considered (see Chapter 5).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.02	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The Report acknowledges that its projections rely largely on historic trends and the best professional judgment of the planning team MassDOT assembled. While MassDEP does not have the expertise to conduct a detailed critique of the Report's methodology, the model was developed with significant input from regional planning experts. The designation of preferred development and preservation areas and the model's logic and assumptions appear to be reasonable given the variables in play and the number of communities being examined.	Thank you for your comment.
L-076.03	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	MassDEP also recognizes that whether the difference in outcomes depicted between the business as usual and smart growth scenarios will be realized is largely dependent on decisions made by municipalities and developers over the next two decades. But the Report also references the multiple forms of technical and financial assistance the Commonwealth and MassDOT in particular has expended and appears to be committed to extend to local and regional decision makers that will motivate and facilitate transportation oriented development and the conservation of environmentally valuable areas. MassDEP believes that in evaluating whether the project has taken all feasible measures to avoid or minimize damage to the environment, it is reasonable to look to the continued implementation by MassDOT of smart growth assistance and incentives by memorializing that commitment in the FEIS/R.	Implementation of the corridor plan, including monitoring and reporting measures, is addressed in Section 5.5.
L-076.04	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The Report concludes that the Attleboro Alternative is impracticable because it fails to meet the MBTA's Service Delivery Policy and the minimum reliability criterion for on-time performance standards. In addition to the relevance of practicability in relation to a MEPA evaluation of whether an alternative meets the project's purpose, the Water Quality Certification regulations, sets the performance standards for the discharge or placement fill in state and federal waters, requires MassDEP to consider practicability in reviewing project alternatives (314 CMR 9.06).	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.05	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Even without a fourth rail option, the schedule for the necessary addition of a third track to the NEC is projected to be seven years as construction can only occur between 1 AM and 5 AM in order not to disrupt normal NEC operations, a constructability prescription that strains the boundaries of practicability. The analysis of the dependence of the Attleboro Alternatives on the NEC leads MassDEP to conclude that there are fatal deficiencies in this Alternative's ability to meet the project purpose in regard to the reliability and practicability criteria that cannot be reasonably overcome by expanding the existing system's infrastructure capacity.	Thank you for your comment.
L-076.06	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Because the scoring is based on the relative impact among the Alternatives, in some instances the grades do not reflect a significant difference in environmental outcomes. This is not the case in the scale of wetland impacts. The Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives alter nearly twice as many acres of wetlands than the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives. The Rapid Bus Alternative also produces worse air quality than the no-build in NOx and Particulate Matter emissions, and negligible reductions in volatile organic compound and CO2 emissions based on the use of diesel fuel.	The letter grade scoring system has been eliminated for the FEIS/FEIR; instead only the actual analysis results are shown.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.07	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>In weighing the significance of the report card scores, MassDEP is acutely aware that all of the Alternatives alter or degrade a range of environmentally sensitive resource areas and would require a variance under the Wetland Regulations. MassDEP is also cognizant that some of the quantitative resource impact distinctions may be less significant in evaluating an Alternative's adverse effect than its qualitative impact, for example adverse effects on rare species from the Attleboro Alternative and wildlife habitat from the Stoughton Alternative. However, the combination of the deficient performance of the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives in meeting the project's purpose and practicability standards and their low environmental ranking in multiple categories that are central to MassDEP's regulatory jurisdiction leads MassDEP to conclude that neither of these Alternatives should be selected to be the Alternative to proceed into the FEIS/R review. On that basis, MassDEP reasoned that it would more be productive to conduct a comparative assessment of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives in order provide information relevant to selecting the preferred alternative to scoped for the FEIS/R. Therefore, the balance of this comment letter is confined to considering the benefits and environmental impacts of these two Alternatives.</p>	<p>The FEIS/FEIR provides further analysis of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives. Chapter 3 provides the rationale for eliminating the Rapid Bus and Attleboro Alternatives from further consideration.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.08	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>Although the Whittenton Alternative generates slightly more total ridership (60 passengers), Stoughton's generates 400 more project-linked boardings, representing commuters switching from automobiles to the South Coast system, and an additional 1,000 for the commuter rail system as a whole. A second distinction in the routes is the origin of boarding of the passengers. The Stoughton Alternative draws nearly 50% of its passengers from Fall River and New Bedford and 19% from the Taunton stations. The Whittenton Alternative draws less than 40% of its passengers from Fall River and New Bedford and 26% from its Taunton station. As a result, of the sum and source of its ridership diversion, the Stoughton Electric Alternative reduces 68,000 more vehicle trips per day which yields less VOCs, NOx, PM2.5 per day than the Whittenton Alternative. Therefore, to the extent that the project's need and purpose is focused on meeting the existing and future public transportation demand between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston and enhancing regional mobility, while collaterally improving air quality, it appears to MassDEP that the Stoughton Alternative better serves those ends. If further assessment is conducted of the Alternatives' relative merits to serve the project's purposes, one possible avenue of inquiry is the availability of measures or incentives that would potentially improve the Whittenton Alternative's Southern Triangle boardings and VMT reduction metrics.</p>	<p>An updated analysis of the effects of the alternatives on transit ridership and air quality is presented in the FEIS/FEIR. Special measures to increase the ridership of the Whittenton Alternative in the Southern Triangle were not evaluated--the proposed station stops in the Southern Triangle were developed for all the build alternatives through the process described in Chapter 3 and there is no reason to alter them at this time.</p>
L-076.09	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>The Report offers no information regarding the potential safety impacts on vehicles or pedestrians as a consequence of shifting the line's use from freight to commuter rail and thereby increasing the frequency of train traffic.</p>	<p>The impact analysis section of Chapter 4.1 contains an incident prediction calculation and commuter rail safety education information is provided in Section 4.1.5.1. Table 4.1-57 summarizes incident probability for at-grade crossings along the Stoughton Alternative, taking into account the frequency of the proposed service.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.10	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>As presented in detail below, MassDEP has evaluated the Report in regard to the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives' impacts in areas subject to MassDEP's jurisdiction. The adverse impact of the all Alternatives is significant enough to require the project to obtain a variance from several of the performance standards in the Wetland Regulations (310 CMR 10.00). Due to the overlap of the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives' routes, except in the areas between the Weir and Canton Junctions, their environmental impacts are indistinguishable in the Southern Triangle and north of Canton Junction. In those areas where they diverge, however, the Stoughton Alternative adversely impacts more wetland resource protection areas along its route including, for example, Bordering Vegetated Wetlands, vernal pools, and wildlife habitat area owing to its traverse of the Pine Swamp, which the Whittenton Alternative avoids. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, has commented on the significant extent of these Alternatives' impact on the Hockomock Swamp and the adequacy of the Report's analysis, but concludes that the differences in their impact on state listed species should not be a determinative factor in the overall selection between these Alternatives.</p>	<p>Impacts on rare species were among the impacts considered in evaluating the alternatives. No one factor was determinative.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.11	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	In sum, the Stoughton Alternative better serves the key measures of addressing the project's need and serving its purposes, but the benefit it accrues in that regard from the geography of its route results in greater harm to significant wetlands resources than the Whittenton Alternative. The Whittenton route, on the other hand, carries the potential of disparately impacting residents in environmental justice neighborhoods with excessive noise. Based on representations made in the Report and the MassDEP's experience, it is reasonably likely that through further minimization, mitigation and compensatory measures, which should be detailed in the FEIS/R, the divergence between these Alternatives can be narrowed to the point where their net differences in environmental impacts will be negligible. In contrast, MassDEP is not aware of additional transportation related measures that can close or substantially narrow the Whittenton Alternative's service of project purposes gap.	Thank you for your comment.
L-076.12	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Note: measurement of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) in acreage is less relevant than its measurement in cubic feet of flood storage lost. However, there is not currently sufficient topographic data to calculate the flood storage losses for each alternative in cubic feet (personal communication, Lisa Standley, Ph.D., VHB, 5/12/11).	Thank you for your comment.
L-076.13	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Note: the number of interceptions of Riverfront Area (RA) is less relevant than the acreage impacted by those occurrences. However, insufficient information is available at present to calculate the impacts on RA acreage (personal communication, Lisa Standley, Ph.D., VHB, 5/12/11, and page 4.16-62 of DEIS/R).	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.14	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	...the Whittenton alternative, however, would have a barrier effect on Box Turtle of an additional 2, 100 feet which the Stoughton Alternative would not have (Table 4.15-28). The NHESP advised MassDEP that because the differences in overall state-listed species impacts between these two Alternatives are small, the differentials should not be a determinative factor in evaluating their relative adverse effects and benefits.	Impacts on rare species were among the impacts considered in evaluating the alternatives. No one factor was determinative.
L-076.15	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	In addition to impacts on rare and endangered species, MassDEP regulates impacts to important wildlife habitat as one of the interests of the Wetlands Protection Act. The project will exceed the thresholds for a wildlife habitat evaluation and should be evaluated pursuant to MassDEP's 2006 Wildlife Habitat Guidance Document. Throughout the inter-agency review process, MassDEP raised concerns about the alternatives' impacts on the quality as well as the quantity of the affected habitat. Quantity, e.g. acres of wetland impact, linear feet of bank, etc., has been the traditional way that project impacts have been evaluated in the permitting process. The development of the landscape level assessment methodology, the Comprehensive Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS), has made it possible to assess the impacts of projects qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The use of CAPS to assess project impacts is consistent with the Wildlife Habitat Guidance Document which requires a more detailed Wildlife Habitat Evaluation and additional mitigation for project impacts that occur at locations identified on CAPS maps as having an IEI value of 0.6 – 1.0, i.e. the top 40% of wildlife habitat. In addition, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has accepted Massachusetts' use of CAPS as its landscape level assessment method to meet the monitoring and assessment requirements to evaluate wetland health.	Thank you for your comment .

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.16	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The Report's CAPS comparative assessment of impacts showed minor differences in impacts on IEI that indicated the Whittenton Alternative would have greater adverse impacts on connectivity potentially resulting in more habitat fragmentation. However, the superior performance of the Stoughton alternative is due primarily to the fact that the Whittenton route is longer than Stoughton's and therefore intercepts more cells in the model (Scott Jackson, UMass, personal communication, 5/16/11).	Thank you for your comment. The impact is also greater due to the habitats crossed along the Whittenton Branch.
L-076.17	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	At MassDEP's request, UMass evaluated the degree to which important habitat (IEI > 0.6) in the baseline assessment would be compromised as a result of the Stoughton Alternative's one mile transit of the Pine Swamp, a 275 acre, un-fragmented high quality wetland that the Whittenton Alternative avoids. These results show that the Stoughton Alternative has a greater loss of cells with high IEI (216.3 units) than the Whittenton alternative (202.8 units) (Brad Compton, personal communication 5/20/11). These results when considered together with the CAPS data reported in the DEIS/R indicate that while the Whittenton Alternative would impact 7 units more than the Stoughton Alternative, the Stoughton route would impact 13.5 additional units considered high value wildlife habitat. UMass calculates that the loss of 13.5 units would be equivalent to 18 acres of Pine Swamp no longer being characterized as important wildlife habitat (i.e. top 40% IEI), representing 6% of the swamp's area. (Brad Compton, UMass, personal communication, 5/26/11).	The CAPS analysis of impacts is provided in Section 4.14.3.4 of the FEIS/FEIR. Table 4.14-28, Loss of Index of Ecological Integrity Units, compares each of the alternatives. Because the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives are differentiated in this regard principally by passing through or avoiding the Pine Swamp, the "total loss excluding common elements" provides a comparison of these two alternatives' effects on Pine Swamp. As shown in the table, the Stoughton Alternative (with the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp) would result in the loss of 302.0 IEI units, while the Whittenton Alternative (also with the trestle) would result in the loss of 312.1 IEI units. As explained in the FEIS/FEIR, restoring passenger rail service through the Pine Swamp would result in a decrease of connectivity in the swamp, with a moderate effect. The Whittenton Alternative uniquely crosses two large undeveloped areas that provide potentially important wildlife habitat. The CAPS analysis indicates that these impacts would result in a greater loss of IEI units for the Whittenton Alternative than as a result of the Stoughton Alternative's impacts to the Pine Swamp.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.18	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>The Report documents that there are no project alternatives that could proceed absent receiving a variance, in particular in regard to the impact to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands and activities in an ACEC. The Report also summarizes the basis for MassDOT's contention that the project accommodates an overriding public interest including: addressing a significant need for public transportation improvements in the South Coast region and providing to the region important benefits in the form of public transit equity, service distribution and ridership, air quality and climate change improvements, and opportunities for smart growth and sustainable development as an alternative to sprawl that is projected to occur under the no-build scenario. The Report presents substantial and credible information on those subject matters, several of which have relied upon in other rail projects to support a variance request.[1] The FEIS/R should further refine how the Alternative selected for further review will advance these public interests.</p> <p>[1] Rail projects reviewed for a variance have included: Greenbush Line Corridor (2002-2004), Plymouth Line and Route 3/3A Interchange Modifications (1994), Old Colony Railroad Neponset River Bridge (1993), Ashland Commuter Rail Station (2000), and Newburyport Extension and Layover facility (1996). The transportation needs addressed by these projects included: alleviating severe traffic congestion during peak periods (Greenbush, Old Colony, Ashland); addressing expected growth in commuters (Greenbush ; Old Colony, Newburyport increase in past 20 years) or high ridership generated (total ridership generated by Ashland Station); address deficient options for regional public transportation (crowding on Old Colony and Red Line, access problems with commuter boat; Old Colony - severe congestion on SE Expressway and Red Line; Newburyport - passenger rail discontinued in 1976 resulting in burden on other lines); reduction of Vehicle Miles Travelled on highways to improve regional traffic flow (Greenbush, Ashland); providing relief for oversubscribed parking demand at other rail and subway stations and in Boston (Greenbush, Old Colony, Ashland); and Increase safety for other drivers and pedestrians</p>	A public interest review is provided in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Variance section of the Regulatory Compliance chapter of the FEIS/FEIR (see Section 8.7.3.1).



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		(Newburyport).	
L-076.19	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Meeting the variance criteria requires mitigation measures that will allow the project to contribute to the protection of the interests of the Wetlands Act. It is MassDEP's opinion that in order for either Alternative to go forward, mitigation measures to off-set the project's direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are warranted. Mitigation should directly mitigate wetland impacts, improve wetland conditions and avoid future indirect and cumulative impacts.	Direct impacts to be mitigated for are discussed in Chapter 4.16, along with mitigation replacement ratios and goals for total mitigation acreage. Mitigation for secondary impacts would be accomplished by replacing functions and values, as discussed on page 4.16-133 of the FEIS/FEIR. Mitigation is proposed to compensate for direct as well as indirect impacts. Mitigation for future indirect and cumulative impacts were also considered in evaluating potential land preservation opportunities, presented in Table 4.16-56.
L-076.20	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	MassDEP typically requires a 2: 1 ratio for BVW mitigation, at least 1:1 for all other wetlands, and encourages a 2: 1 mitigation for rare species impacts. However, flexibility exists in the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. While the concept of redressing impacts to some wetland resources within the affected watershed rather than on a site specific basis is valid, that conclusion is premature for impacts to BLSF because it is not known currently what extent of compensatory flood storage can be provided at or near the points of impact, as is necessary to address local impacts to the flood control interest of the Act. This information should be developed in detail in the FEIS/R.	A total of 13.1 acres of potential compensatory flood storage is proposed in the mitigation plan. MassDOT would commit to creating the amount of mitigation necessary to satisfy required mitigation goals. Site-specific compensatory flood mitigation could not be located at every area that experiences impact along the right-of-way. Agency members of the ICG focused on fewer mitigation parcels with larger compensatory flood storage mitigation potential. In final design, analysis of affected waterways would be undertaken to demonstrate that the proposed mitigation is sufficient or that there is an insignificant increase in flooding. Proposed mitigation for compensatory flood storage is discussed in Chapter 4.16.
L-076.21	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The DEIS/R's lack of specificity in the mitigation assessment also limits MassDEP's and other agencies' ability to consider or comment on the extent to which the impacts to habitat connectivity can be mitigated by methods such as providing wildlife passage structures through the rail bed, and the degree to which improvements to stream crossings may help to improve the passage of fish and wildlife. Similarly, insufficient information has been presented to determine the degree to which existing stream crossings within the abandoned rail bed can be improved because of the site specific information needed on topography and rail bed configuration has not been developed.	Page 4.15-63, heading title "Provide Wildlife Corridors" (Turtle Crossings), and the heading, "Enhance and Replace Habitat" on page 4.15-64 provide mitigation plans to restore state-listed species habitats and improve habitat connectivity. NHESP has not requested a long-term monitoring program. If required as part of the Conservation and Management Plan, MassDOT would develop and implement a pre- and post-construction monitoring plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures described in Chapter 4.15.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.22	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>MassDOT has committed to land acquisition as a component of the mitigation strategies. MassDEP believes that targeted acquisition to mitigate for the cumulative and indirect effects of the project is an important and valuable contribution towards implementation of smart growth principles. Section 5 of the DEIS/R discusses the indirect and cumulative impacts of the project. The model's assumption's yield projections that show that under Scenario 1 (baseline plus induced growth without smart growth measures) the No-build Alternative will result in an additional 44,995 acres of loss, 13.11 of which will be wetlands. The implementation of smart growth principles can reduce those impacts by over 13,800 acres of land, and over 3.5 acres of wetlands. Similar results are predicted for biodiversity effects, which indicates that aggressive implementation of smart growth can reduce habitat impacts by nearly 50% (Table 5-12). Therefore, it is MassDEP's perspective that the maximum implementation of measures to enable smart growth should be adopted.</p>	<p>Land conservation was among the mitigation measures considered. MassDOT's plans to encourage implementation of the Corridor Plan are described in Section 5.5.</p>
L-076.23	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>MassDOT has demonstrated its commitment and resources to conduct and motivate smart growth planning, but it has limited ability to implement Smart Growth land preservation priorities since much of the opportunity to do so depends on each community's willingness to adopt local zoning controls, and landowners' incentives to participate in transfer of development rights and other such smart growth mechanisms described in the Corridor Plan. One concrete means to translate the planning into resource protection is for MassDOT to fund for conservation protection targeted acquisition of parcels in Priority Protection Areas that are important to meet the long term benefit of populations of rare species and preserve land with high IEI. The selection of high IEI parcels for preservation should consider properties that will not be adversely impacted by the direct or indirect impacts of the project which will reduce IEI scores after construction.</p>	<p>The Priority Protection Areas described in the Corridor Plan are in part intended to benefit rare species and preserve high IEI land. Acquiring this land will be a joint or individual effort by local, regional, and state agencies. The Smart Growth Implementation Plan in Section 5.5 describes how MassDOT would monitor Smart Growth measures such as land acquisition.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.24	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Regardless of the final selected alternative, development of a Smart Growth Corridor Plan has the potential to mitigate environmental impacts and advance environmental preservation along the project corridor. The Plan represents an opportunity to advance environmental protection strategies with land use planning which optimizes economic and housing development, contains sprawl, and protects the integrity of critical natural resource habitats. MassDEP encourages the proponent to conduct an analysis of how to optimize land acquisition for areas that will accomplish these three goals and consult with EEA agencies in an effort to identify and protect areas critical to preserving the integrity of existing and valuable ecosystems. MassDOT should also partner with local planning boards and conservation commissions, regional planning agencies, and non-profit land trust/conservation organizations in a coordinated effort to adopt land preservation strategies which serve to stem wetland habitat fragmentation from sprawl commonly associated with unconstrained development. MassDEP requests the Secretary consider requiring this analysis in the FEIS/R in order to identify commitments that will ensure efforts to acquire land meet the project mitigation requirements and longer-term smart growth goals.	Section 5.5 describes the monitoring plan which, through the metrics, will track land acquisition. Chapters 4.15 and 4.16 also identify mitigation commitments.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.25	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>MassDEP recommends that the mitigation strategies to be presented in the FEIS/R contain the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a 2:1 ratio for BVW mitigation, at least 1:1 for all other wetlands, and encourages a 2:1 mitigation for rare species impacts, subject to consultation with the NHESP;</li> <li>• Propose locations and design specific details for wildlife crossings;</li> <li>• Propose removal of targeted portions of the existing rail bed which will not be re-used for the new rail line (such as within the portion of the Hockomock Swamp where trestle will replace existing rail bed), specifically in locations that would improve wildlife habitat and fish passage, increase connectivity and reduce fragmentation without adversely affecting adjacent wetland resources;</li> <li>• Develop topographic information and propose improvements to existing stream crossings at site specific locations to improve wildlife and fish passage;</li> <li>• Perform meaningful riverfront area improvements and/or restoration to mitigate for riverfront impacts;</li> <li>• Provide on-site elevation specific compensatory storage for lost flood storage, or if such compensatory storage cannot be provided, to demonstrate an insignificant increase in flooding, to demonstrate that any incremental increase in flooding could be contained on the proponent's property, or to acquire flood easements;</li> <li>• Acquire land to meet the goals of advancing smart growth, providing long term net benefits to rare species and preserving high IEI land;</li> <li>• Commit to specific actions to implement the Corridor Plan and to work with communities to implement smart growth;</li> <li>• Propose wetland restoration within the Hockomock ACEC.</li> </ul>	<p>Wetland mitigation is addressed in Chapter 4.16. The Corps New England District mitigation policies require a minimum 3:1 ratio for forested wetlands and thus the mitigation proposals outlined in Chapter 4.16 exceed MassDEP requirements.</p> <p>Wildlife crossings at culvert and bridge locations will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing Standards, as described in Section 4.14.3 of the FEIS/FEIR, as are recommendations for specific locations. Design details will be developed during preliminary and final design. Additional wildlife crossings, consisting of tunnels and between-tie structures, will be sited at the locations identified in the figures. Site-specific information such as topography and hydrology will be taken into consideration for each culvert and, as appropriate, replacements will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing general standards.</p> <p>Approximately 8,500 feet of the railroad bed within the Hockomock Swamp will be bridged by a trestle that will allow wildlife passage underneath. The railroad bed will not be removed here or at any other location, as removal would adversely affect the hydrology of the swamp. Existing culverts within the trestle segment will be daylighted in order to improve wildlife passage through these structures.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.26	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	While mitigation sites should be designed to preserve critical functions, such as flood storage volume at each locality, restoration of previously impacted wetlands and land preservation may also be considered as part of the mitigation effort. A high level of assurance needs to be provided that land identified for preservation, restriction, or replication/restoration mitigation to be taken by eminent domain can be acquired and will satisfy specific mitigation goals. As part of these assurances, addition fallback mitigation areas should be identified in the event that primary mitigation goals are not achieved.	Chapter 4.16 includes identification of backup mitigation areas.
L-076.27	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	MassDEP concurs with the Report's conclusion that with comprehensive and early planning and design of adequate containment, minimization and mitigation measure and consistent implementation and maintenance procedures, as discussed below, neither Alternatives' discharges would result in impairment of surface or groundwater quality or functions.	Thank you for your comment.
L-076.28	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The FEIS/R should assess the ability of the selected alternative to meet each of the 10 Massachusetts Stormwater Standards or specify if a variance to the standards specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6) may be required.	Section 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR documents the ability of the project to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards without a variance. Section 4.17.3 provides a summary of how the project complies with the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards (310 CMR 10.05).



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.29	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>The DEIS/R generally discussed Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) or Low Impact Development (LID) practices to manage stormwater runoff at proposed stations and parking facilities. Page 4.17-69 indicates the ESSD practices will be considered during the design phase. Because 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) and 314 CMR 9.06(6) require analysis of alternatives to meet stormwater management requirements using ESSD or LID practices, it is highly recommended that ESSD or LID alternatives be assessed early on in project development as their selection will affect the amount of land taking. Otherwise, ESSD or LID alternatives may be precluded as the project design advances to permitting. For example, the Report indicates that deck parking will be considered as an ESSD practice versus at-grade parking. Deck parking has a smaller impervious area footprint and generates much less stormwater runoff than an equivalent number of at-grade parking spaces. Deck parking would mean that less land would need to be acquired than an at-grade parking facility. However, deck parking is substantially more expensive than at-grade parking, so the trade-off between less land taking and higher capital cost is best weighed through an alternatives analysis such as through the MEPA process.</p>	<p>Environmentally Sensitive Site Design (ESSD) and Low Impact Development (LID) practices are incorporated into the design of proposed stations and parking facilities and are documented in Section 4.17.3.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.30	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>ESSD measures can be furthered through assessment of conceptual design principles in the FEIS/R, such as a project commitment to create smaller parking stalls and circulation lanes than traditional parking lots, specifying use of porous pavements in place of traditional pavements, and pavement disconnection versus use of traditional curb and gutter drainage. Other ESSD and LID practices that should be considered besides those listed in the DEIS/R are retaining existing mature non-invasive vegetation, using exfiltrating bio-retention in place of raised traffic islands, and tree box filters. The Report indicates that station and parking alternatives are to be located on developed sites whenever possible as an ESSD measure to minimize increase in stormwater runoff. When existing developed sites are razed for complete tear downs, MassDEP expects that the Stormwater Standards can be fully met versus only to the maximum extent possible as fewer constraints exist with complete tear downs compared to sites which are only minimally redeveloped. MassDEP recommends that the FEIS/IR identify a new station, a reconstructed station, and a section of track in an environmentally sensitive area and design to the maximum extent feasible how those structures would be constructed and operated consistent with ESSD and LID concepts.</p>	See Chapter 4.17.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.31	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	No information appears to have been included regarding whether stormwater peak runoff rate attenuation requirements will be met. Peak rate control structures are in general larger than water quality treatment practices, so the FEIS/R need to assess whether each station and layover facility contains sufficient land area and whether additional right-of-way needs to be purchased along potential rail line routes to place attenuation structures. Stormwater recharge should be analyzed in the FEIS/R for its potential to attenuate peak runoff rates. If the analysis indicates that stormwater recharge can only attenuate a portion of the peak rate attenuation volume, open attenuation structures should be given preference in the analysis over closed structures such as underground chambers, which have higher maintenance requirements.	Where required, attenuation structures have been configured to fit within the parcel boundaries that have been identified for each station and layover site (Sections 4.17.3).
L-076.32	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The DEIS/R notes that layover facilities are classified by MassDEP as Land Uses with Higher Potential Pollutant Loads (LUHPPL), where additional measures are required for source control and pretreatment are required. In addition, the FEIS/R should identify the design capacity of the parking proposed at each station. Stations with parking lots for 1,000 vehicle trips or more are also classified as LUHPPL. MassDEP is crediting the top asphalt layer in porous asphalt as meeting the pre-treatment requirements specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(5) for stormwater infiltration from those parking lots with 1,000 vehicle trips or more.	Parking design capacity for the stations is provided in Chapter 3. Information on stormwater treatment for the stations is provided in Chapter 4.17.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.33	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The DEIS/R notes that some alternatives involve Zone A and Zone I of public drinking water sources, as well as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs). Zone A, Zone I, Zone II, ORWs, Vernal Pools and other areas are classified as critical areas pursuant to 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(6). Zone I may only be used for intended drinking water purposes pursuant to 310 CMR 22.00. In a Zone A, 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(6) does not allow stormwater treatment practices or piping unless it's essential to the operation of the public drinking water system. The FEIS/R should identify how each alternative impacts critical areas, and how stormwater requirements will be addressed. Any potential Vernal Pools in the track route or at Stations or Layover Facilities need to be assessed to determine whether they can be certified as Vernal Pools.	Station site parking counts are included for each station in Sections 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR. North Easton Station is the only station with a proposed parking lot that would generate 1,000 vehicle trips per day. Additional treatments have been incorporated into the stormwater design at this station to comply with the pre-treatment requirements specified at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(5).
L-076.34	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	There is a TMDL for the Neponset River for pathogens, 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(4) requires stormwater treatment measures to meet TMDL requirements in addition to providing TSS removal. Therefore, the FEIS/R should analyze for provision of measures for stormwater discharges to the Neponset that will meet both the TMDL and TSS removal requirements.	The Attleboro Alternative has been dismissed and is no longer under consideration. As a result, the project has no new discharges to the Neponset River or its tributaries. Stormwater discharges within the Neponset River watershed are limited to existing discharges to the municipal separate storm sewers at Canton Center and Stoughton Stations. These stations are described in Sections 4.17.2 and 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.35	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>Section 7.4.10 of the DEIS/R indicates existing ditches along rail corridors will be improved to ensure proper drainage. In order to be credited as a stormwater treatment BMP, the improvements will need to be designed to meet specifications listed in the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook, Volume 2 for water quality swales, infiltration trenches, or exfiltrating bio-retention cells. Further, Section 7.4.10 indicates that stormwater systems at existing stations will be upgraded as necessary to accommodate additional pavement. 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k)(7) requires redevelopment at those existing stations subject to wetland/401 regulations to meet the Stormwater Standards to the maximum extent practicable (MEP) and improve existing conditions. This requires a site specific analysis that describes the measures that can be provided to MEP and improve existing conditions for each Stormwater Standard. For example, if there is an existing station, the analysis needs to examine measures to attenuate runoff from the existing pavement rather than simply looking at attenuating the runoff from the proposed new pavement areas.</p>	<p>Track drainage features are described in Section 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR. As directed by MassDEP, the proposed features were based on the Greenbush Line drainage features. Coordination with MassDEP will be necessary to establish TSS removal criteria for the proposed BMPs.</p> <p>One existing station is proposed to be upgraded (Canton Center, Section 4.17.2 and 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR). The only improvement at this location would be to relocate the existing platform, with no increase in paved areas.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.36	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>The DEIS/R appears to indicate that stormwater runoff will only be addressed when point sources, such as outfalls or drainage ditches, are present or proposed and implies that country drainage of runoff from the track drainage does not require compliance with stormwater management measures. Land disturbance of 1-acre or more is classified as a point source by EPA for purposes of the Construction General Permit. In addition, if the track construction, stations, or layover facilities are in a wetland resource area or buffer zone, the Stormwater Standards at 310 CMR 10.05(6)(k) apply. The DEIS/R appears to suggest that the track ballast and underlying or adjacent soils will naturally attenuate contaminants of concern in stormwater runoff from rail operations without treatment. The Stormwater Standards require source control measures to minimize potential for contaminants and treatment. The Greenbush rail line included extensive track drainage system, with a combination of drainage swales and perforated pipe underdrain in the ballast that carried runoff and groundwater to remote locations for discharge to streams, bordering vegetated wetlands and other resource areas located at low points in the track alignment. Because of the need to maintain a dry rail bed, MassDEP anticipates that a similar track drainage system will need to be designed as part of the project, to provide sufficient treatment prior to discharging track drainage runoff to resource areas.</p>	<p>The project will be required to obtain coverage under the EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit. As required under this permit, Best Management Practices (BMPs) for point source control of stormwater runoff will be developed and implemented. Construction period mitigation measures are described generally in Section 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>Chapter 4.17 documents the proposed stormwater management system for each component of the project whether or not it is located in a wetland resource area or buffer zone. Detailed descriptions of stormwater management systems are provided for station sites, layover sites and track components in Sections 4.17.2 and 4.17.3 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.37	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>Section 3.2, page 3-101 for the Stoughton Alternative indicates for culverts that would remain in place, existing culverts would be extended to accommodate the wider rail bed. Section 7.4.10 indicates Stream Crossing Standards will be met to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP). Compliance with Stream Crossing Standards is fully required for new culverts reviewed pursuant to Wetland or 401 regulations, and the Corps Programmatic General Permit. Compliance to MEP standards is required for replacement culverts. Constructing extensions to existing culverts may inhibit fish, amphibian, reptile, and other wildlife passage.</p> <p>The FEIS/R needs to analyze new and replacement culverts ability to fully meet the Stream Crossing Standards, rather than only to the MEP as part of the project mitigation opportunity. Bankfull will need to be identified as the Stream Crossing Standards require new or replacement crossings to be sized to 1.2 times bankfull width at a minimum. Spans and open bottom arches should be analyzed to meet the Standards rather than only analyze closed bottom culverts.</p> <p>During the comment period, MassDOT met with MassDEP representatives and identified spans and open bottom arches as potential mitigation measures within the track alignment containing the proposed trestle. These potential mitigation measures should be considered throughout the entire track alignment to the extent that they are practicable to improve fish and wildlife passage, and do not interfere with safe train operations. Closed bottom culverts are required to be embedded to a depth of at least 2 feet, so closed bottom culvert designs need to analyze measures to install and maintain the stone. The measures need to be met by use of single culverts, rather than double barrels. Where double or multiple barrels are proposed, at least one barrel should meet the Standards by itself. These measures provide for fish, amphibian, reptile, and other wildlife passage, so it is essential that connectivity be provided. These measures for fish and wildlife passage need to be included as part of project design and not deferred to installation at a later time.</p>	<p>All replaced culverts bridges will be designed to meet the Stream Crossing Standards where such design is not constrained by engineering requirements, and/or provided that the designed culverts would not result in drainage or other adverse effects to wetlands, as explained in Section 4.14.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR. No new culverts are planned.</p> <p>Wildlife crossings at culvert and bridge locations will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing Standards, which require open-bottom structures, where not constrained by engineering requirements, as described in Section 4.14.3.6 of the FEIS/FEIR. Additional wildlife crossings, consisting of tunnels and between-tie structures, will be sited at the locations identified in Chapter 4.14 figures. Wildlife passage will also be facilitated by the 8,500-foot long trestle over the Hockomock Swamp. The expense of spans and arches, which are recommended by the Optimum standards, for replacement culverts is not warranted because similar ecological benefits can be obtained by open-bottom culverts.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.38	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	At the level of detail provided in the DEIS/R, the filled tidelands present at the Fall River Battleship Cove Station and at the New Bedford Whale's Tooth Station and Wamsutta layover facility could be considered landlocked tidelands as defined at 310 CMR 9.02. MassDEP welcomes the opportunity to view more detailed plans to confirm. The FEIS/R should provide a public benefit determination consistent with chapter 168 of the Acts of 2007.	Section 4.18.5 of the FEIS/FEIR provides information in support of a Public Benefits Determination.
L-076.39	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	According to the DEIS/R, the layover facilities in Fall River at Weaver Cove East, Weaver Cover West and the ISP off North Main Street along the west side of the Fall River Secondary line are located on filled tidelands. MassDEP established the presumptive line of jurisdiction through professional review of a series of historic maps of the coast. To rebut this presumption, the project team needs to provide, in the FEIS/R and advisably through earlier consultation with MassDEP, a reliable surveyed map or plan that depicts the mean high water mark prior to alteration/impoundment and that can be accurately registered to a contemporary base map and was not available to the presumptive line professional team, along with other information as may be available such as cross-sections of the railroad construction.	MassDOT has accepted the MassDEP presumptive high water mark at the Weaver's Cove East site, as explained in Section 4.18.2 and 4..18.3 of the FEIS/FEIR, and documented by Figures 4.18-25. The Weaver's Cove West and the ISP sites have been dismissed from further consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.40	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>MassDEP welcomes the opportunity to meet with the project team to make a definitive jurisdictional determination, as offered in the DEIS/R, based on either field inspection or plans providing greater detail. For planning purposes, the project team should note the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-If a non-tidal river or stream is navigable by any vessel any time of the year, presume that public funds have been expended "either upstream or downstream within the river basin" (emphasis added) and will be subject to jurisdiction under MGL c. 91 and 310 CMR 9.00. Lacking a definitive list of where public funds have been expended, MassDEP presumes as a general rule that only the non-navigable uppermost reaches of a river basin are not subject to review.</li> <li>-The presence of a culvert should not automatically presume a lack of navigation. A field inspection can determine if a canoe or kayak can traverse through a culvert given its length, width and ground elevation.</li> <li>-If the structure was previously authorized by license or legislation, a minor modification of that authorization is an option as described at 9.05(3)(a) and 9.22(2). MassDEP disagrees with the author's interpretation of that a Minor Modification can replace licensing for existing unauthorized rail structures. If no authorization is found for the existing structure, then a license application is expected to be submitted.</li> <li>-The exception to licensing at 310 CMR 9.05(3) (c) would only apply if the project team is able to demonstrate the "continuation of a public service project", which presumably would not be true on a rail bed that has been in disuse for a number of years.</li> </ul>	Chapter 4.18 of the FEIS/FEIR provides an update on agency consultations. Updated jurisdictional determinations are provided in Section 4.18.2 of the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.41	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>Determination of Water-Dependency: At the scale of the plans provided in the DEIS/R, it is difficult to determine the water-dependency of the proposed rail crossings. However, if the proposed crossing spans the water body from one bank to the opposite bank, the Secretary could determine through the MEPA review that it would be unreasonable to be located away from the tidal or inland water and thereby consider the crossing water-dependent pursuant to 310 CMR 9.12(2)(d).</p> <p>MassDEP agrees with the statement in the DEIS/R that the use of filled tidelands for railroad layover yards in Fall River at Weaver Cove East, Weaver Cover West and the ISP yard off North Main Street are non-water dependent use infrastructure facilities.</p>	Section 3.18.3 of the FEIS/FEIR describes the 23 bank-to-bank stream crossings subject to 310 CMR 9.02 and 310 CMR 9.12(2)(d).



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.42	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>Regulatory Standards: All railroad components subject to licensing will be reviewed under the standards of 310 CMR 9.31-9.40, and, for nonwater-dependent infrastructure, under 310 CMR 9.54 and 9.55. Table 4.18-12 summarizes the regulatory standards applicable to this project accurately with the following exceptions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Note that "replacement, reconstruction or other modification" to existing railroad beds is allowed, even in a Designated Port Area, provided there is limited net encroachment per 310 CMR 9.31(2)(b) and (c).</li> <li>-The Final EIR should articulate in what ways the South Coast rail project is consistent with the approved Municipal Harbor Plans for Fall River and New Bedford, per 310 CMR 9.34. Of specific note, the DEIS/R states that intermodal connection to the ferry service in New Bedford is desirable but there was no discussion of how this would be achieved.</li> <li>-The FEIS/R should articulate how the railroad components subject to licensing will preserve or enhance navigational capacity and maintain or enhance public access pursuant to 310 CMR 9.35 and 9.36. Further detail should be provided to better understand the statement in Table 4.18-12 that "wherever this cannot be achieved, feasible mitigation or compensation measures would be provided." This is interpreted, at 310 CMR 9.35(1), as enhancing the public's rights, such as navigation, fishing or providing alternative public access opportunities. Mitigating flood and erosion related hazards and attaining water quality standards are laudable goals but need to be related back to how these measures enhance the inherent rights of the public to be applicable.</li> <li>- For the nonwater-dependent layover facilities, the performance standards of 310 CMR 9.54 and 9.55 would be applicable; the standards of 9.51 and 9.53 would not be applicable. While it is understood that public access may be restricted in a railroad yard, the FEIS/R should explore where on or near the layover facility the project team can "take reasonable measures to provide open spaces for active or passive recreation at the water's edge" pursuant to 9.55(2).</li> </ul>	<p>There are no areas where replacement, reconstruction, or other modification to existing railroad beds would result in limited net encroachment per 310 CMR 9.31(2)(b) and c.</p> <p>Section 4.18.6.5 of the FEIS/FEIR describes how the project is consistent with the New Bedford and Fall River Municipal Harbor Plans (only New Bedford has an official MHP). Intermodal connections from the Whale's Tooth Station to the New Bedford ferry terminal would be provided by the local transit authority.</p> <p>As described in Section 4.18.2 and Table 4.18-1 of the FEIS/FEIR, infrastructure crossing facilities (bridges and culverts) would be reconstructed to maintain the existing navigational capacity. Several of the Taunton River bridges would be reconstructed with fewer in-water piers than the current bridges, which would enhance navigability.</p> <p>This comment refers to the DEP regulations at CMR Section 9.35. The quoted text in full reads (9.35) "the project is anticipated to comply with this regulation by preserving or enhancing the existing capacity for navigation within jurisdictional non-tidal rivers and streams. Wherever this cannot be achieved ..." As documented in Section 4.18.2 and Table 4.18-1 of the FEIS/FEIR, the proposed bridge and culvert replacements will fully preserve or enhance the existing capacity for navigation. No mitigation or compensation measures are proposed.</p> <p>As described in Section 4.18.4.2 of the FEIS/FEIR, the proposed Weaver's Cove East Layover facility is the only non-water-dependent layover facility subject to Chapter 91 licensing. This layover facility will not affect public access to the Taunton River shoreline. The facility will be located on filled tidelands, and will not significantly interfere with the public's rights of fishing, fowling, and navigation within the existing flowed tidelands of the Taunton River.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.43	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	Public Benefit Determination: The FEIS/R should provide a public benefit determination consistent with chapter 168 of the Acts of 2007 that includes, among other factors, the benefits to the public trust rights in tidelands and environmental protection or preservation.	Section 4.18.5 of the FEIS/FEIR provides information in support of a Public Benefits Determination.
L-076.44	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The DEIS/R includes mesoscale and microscale analyses of vehicular emissions for each Alternative. The DEIS/R briefly describes three fuel options for the Rapid Bus Alternative, including biodiesel and natural gas. However the air quality analysis did not provide an evaluation of the difference in emissions from the fuel options and assumed the use of diesel fuel only. MassDEP recommends that the Expanded Bus service use examine the use of alternative fuels and incorporate their use whenever feasible. The air quality analyses assume that all locomotives used in the rail alternatives will be new.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
L-076.45	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	MassDEP recognizes that there are differences in the emission outcome between the Alternatives; however, the differences are minor at the mesoscale levels. Except for Whittenton's Electric's CO air quality benefits, the results of the air quality analyses presented on Table 4.9-26 summarizing the 2030 mesoscale impacts for each Alternative show that the Stoughton Electric provides the best overall emission reduction of VOC, NOx, PM10, PM2.5 and CO2 of all the Alternatives.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.46	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>MassDEP strongly supports the proponent's commitment to the following construction period mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require construction contractors to follow all applicable regulations regarding control of construction vehicles emissions through proper equipment and motor vehicle maintenance, the prohibition of excessive idling of construction equipment engines as, required by MassDEP regulations in 310 CMR 7.11.</li> <li>• Require contract stipulation that all diesel construction equipment used on-site will be fitted with after-engine emission controls such as diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) or diesel particulate filters (DPFs),</li> <li>• Require contractors to implement appropriate dust control measures such as spraying stockpiles and regular sweeping of roadways adjacent to construction zones.</li> </ul>	The requested construction air quality mitigation measures are incorporated in Chapter 7.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.47	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	<p>The April 2009 Certificate called for the DEIS/R to provide information on a substantial number of GHG related topics including fuels, building energy efficiency and renewable energy. The Report expressly did not address building energy efficiency or renewable energy assessment based on the rationale that the project's buildings would be open to the outside and not use HVAC equipment. The Report also concluded that while there would be no difference in residential GHG generation between business as usual and a smart growth scenario. The only operational air quality mitigation commitment made is for plug ins and electric block heaters at layover facilities.</p> <p>MassDEP believes that the Report's rationale for not conducting any stationary source GHG analysis is inconsistent with other MEPA projects subject to the GHG Policy that have evaluated interior and exterior/parking lot lighting for energy efficiency and reliance on photovoltaic energy. While the quantitative energy savings will not be determinative in selecting the FEIS/R Alternative or perhaps substantive enough to justify quantification by modeling, the FEIS/R should identify GHG reduction-related design and operational features that MassDOT will commit to implement. Those commitments should provide for flexibility and incentives to motivate MassDOT to search out the most innovative solutions available when the stations and related facilities are in real-time design and construction.</p>	<p>Energy efficient features for stations and related facilities will be developed during final design in accordance with Commonwealth policy and industry standards at that time.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.48	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The Report estimates that even accounting for induced growth, the Stoughton/Whittenton Alternative will result in a net GHG reduction over the No-Build scenario as a result of emission reductions driven by new state and federal rules governing mobile sources. In addition, the DEIS/R projects that in excess of 450,400 VMTs would be reduced as a result of a fully implemented smart growth strategy, but the estimated mileage savings are not converted into GHG reductions. As with the stationary source projections, estimating the GHG mobile-related smart growth may not be significant enough to justify modeled quantification, but the DEIS/R is deficient in failing to identify GHG mitigation commitments that will contribute towards reductions in VMTs.	An updated analysis of GHG emissions with and without smart growth is provided in Chapter 5.
L-076.49	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The DEIS/R indicates that a feeder bus network is "envisioned" by MassDOT to connect the urbanized communities in South Coast region to the stations. A feeder bus network would provide an alternative to driving to stations and would support an expanded TOD effect if MassDOT provided and/or worked with developers to facilitate shuttle buses from business parks, mixed use developments and malls to the stations. MassDEP fully supports the concept of a feeder/shuttle bus network with frequent and convenient local bus linkage to the stations. MassDEP believes a feeder/shuttle bus network that enhances local and intra-regional access to the stations should be a project commitment and recommends the proponent in cooperation with the two regional transit authorities further explore the concept and provide a project update in the FEIS/R. Feeder buses should accommodate commuters who choose to bike to bus stops. Rail stations should provide adequate bike racks and storage and also provide space and other support for programs that allow train riders to pick up bikes at one locate and drop them off elsewhere. MassDOT should commit to make the project a flagship for implementation of its GreenDOT program.	Information on feeder bus service is provided in Chapter 3.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-076.50	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	In specific communities however, both routes have disparate impacts, particularly the Whittenton Alternative's comparative impact in Taunton. The Stoughton Alternative will have a disproportionate noise impact in Stoughton, 25% of the affected residents, 97 homes, being located in an environmental justice neighborhood. Along the Attleboro Secondary portion of the Whittenton route in Taunton, over 500 residences in environmental justice neighborhoods will be impacted, equaling 35% of the affected population. It should be noted these residents are currently impacted by freight train operations, which operate on a significantly reduced frequency than the proposed commuter rail.	Environmental justice impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.4.
L-076.51	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	The Report summarizes MassDOT's noise mitigation policy which makes the construction of noise barriers subject to a per-resident cost effectiveness criterion. Based on the difference in impacts, it is projected that the Whittenton Alternative will cost \$420,000 more to implement noise mitigation than required for the Stoughton route. While mitigation cost-effectiveness cannot be ignored, MassDEP has concerns that proceeding on the basis that MassDOT's mitigation commitment is to be limited to its policy formula may not adequately address compliance with MassDEP's air quality regulations and Noise Policy or the disparate impact in certain environmental justice neighborhoods. MassDEP recommends that for the selected Alternative, the FEIS/R more closely evaluate noise impacts and mitigation and make commitments that address the above concerns.	An updated noise mitigation plan is presented in Chapter 4.6.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.01	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	The alternatives assessed in the DEIS/DEIR vary greatly as to the extent of their impact to state-listed species and their habitats, and NHESP's preliminary analysis suggests that it may be possible to avoid the need for a MESA Conservation & Management Permit for all but one of the proposed DEIS/DEIR alternatives (Stoughton, "straight" and Whittenton variants). However, even if the need for a MESA Conservation & Management Permit could not be completely avoided for the Attleboro and Rapid Bus alternatives (e.g., due to impacts to priority habitat associated with constructing a second track along portions of the New Bedford Main Line), any required endangered species mitigation would be modest compared to the mitigation that would be required for the Stoughton alternative.	The Attleboro and Rapid Bus alternatives would not be practicable, see Chapter 3.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.02	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	<p>The Executive Summary, Section 4.15, and Section 3.3.3.2 of the DEIS/DEIR contain various qualitative and quantitative measures of the adverse impacts of the various alternatives on state-listed species. This includes a summary of an impact analysis completed by the NHESP, which properly concludes that the Stoughton Alternatives would have far greater impacts to state-listed species and their habitats than the Attleboro or Rapid Bus alternatives (Section 4.15.3.5, see "NHESP Scores" and "Overall Habitat Functions Lost," and "Barrier Effects" in the various tables). This conclusion is similarly reflected in the "Barrier Effect Grade" in Table 3.3-24 which assigns a grade of "F" to the Stoughton and Whittenton alternatives and a grade of "A" to the Rapid Bus and Attleboro alternatives. We note that compared to the Stoughton straight alternative, the Whittenton alternative impacts one additional area of Box Turtle Priority Habitat, but it also avoids the ecologically significant Pine Swamp Atlantic White Cedar wetland that supports a state-listed butterfly. However, because the differences in overall state-listed species impacts between these two Stoughton alternatives are small, it is the Division's opinion that they should not play a determinative role in evaluation of the relative impacts and merits of these two variants of the Stoughton alternative.</p>	<p>No one factor played a determinative role.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.03	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	<p>The DEIS/DEIR presents other measures for assessing the state-listed species habitat impact of the alternatives: (1) the total acreage of Priority Habitat impacted with or without existing disturbed areas included, and (2) the individual species impact assessments based on vegetation cover types. In the Division's view, these measures may not provide a meaningful basis for comparing state-listed species impacts among the various alternatives, and therefore, should not be used by the Army Corps or MEPA in determining the LEDPA or evaluating which alternatives should be carried forward. The Division believes that the calculations of total acreage of Priority Habitat impacted do not adequately take into account habitat quality or the habitat requirements of the various species, indirect effects, or barrier effects. These broader considerations are necessary to meaningfully assess the effect of a given acreage of impact on a given listed species. In addition, the NHESP disagrees with some of the assumptions of the individual species impact assessments performed by the project proponent based on the vegetation cover type assumptions shown in Table 4.15-9. As examples, (1) Wood Turtles make extensive use of USS, AG, P, and CL cover types; (2) Blue-spotted Salamanders are associated with RM, RM/AWC; (3) Long-leaved Panic Grass can be associated with W (e.g. seasonally drying pondshores), P, and other open canopy settings (e.g. swales, wet meadows, some of which are small and do not classify as wetland based on aerial photo-interpretation; and (3) the host plant for Water Willow Stem Borer is associated with a great diversity of wetland types including W (pond and lake margins), M, SS, vernal pools, and wetter sections of bogs. Finally, the Division notes that the project proponent has recently confirmed an error in the habitat impact acreage calculations related to the Whittenton alternative as presented in several locations in the DEIS/DEIR, including Tables 4.15-22 and 4.15-30. This results in an understatement of the acreage of Priority Habitat impacted by the Whittenton alternative, which actually has impact acreages roughly comparable to the Stoughton "straight" alternative.</p>	<p>The state-listed species evaluations in Chapter 4.15 have been updated, taking comments and coordination with NHESP into consideration.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Instead, the Division recommends that the Barrier Effect Grade shown in Table 3.3-24, and the NHESP scores and overall assessment of "Habitat Functions Lost" (see tables in Section 4.15.3.5) be used for evaluating the alternatives. Although the Division believes that this subset of the state-listed species information provided in the DEIS/DEIR is adequate for this stage of project evaluation, if the ACOE or MEPA require additional quantitative analysis of the relative state-listed species impacts of the various alternatives, we strongly recommend that the project proponent, the Army Corps and MEPA consult with the NHESP in developing or applying other state-listed species metrics.</p>	
L-065.04	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	<p>Before a project can be eligible for a MESA Conservation &amp; Management Permit, the Director of the Division must first determine that impacts to state-listed species and their habitats have been adequately avoided and minimized, and that the "applicant has adequately assessed alternatives to both temporary and permanent impacts to State-listed Species" (321 CMR 10.23). In addition to the habitat impact assessment discussed above, the DEIR/DEIS contains detailed information about the practicability of the various alternatives and the extent to which the various alternatives achieve the project purposes. Although the Division will not render a final decision until after receipt of a MESA filing and/or Conservation &amp; Management Permit application, review of public and agency comments, and completion of the MEPA process, it is the Division's opinion that the alternatives analysis presented in the DEIS/DEIR is adequate for this stage in the project review process.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.05	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	The Division anticipates that one or more alternatives will be retained for further consideration and analysis in the FEIS/FEIR. As acknowledged in the DEIS/DEIR, a more detailed, finer-scale quantification of state-listed species habitat impacts will be conducted during this next phase of review. The NHESP should be consulted about methodology prior to the initiation of further habitat analysis. Similarly, the Division expects that a more detailed quantification of impacts to vernal pool habitat, general wildlife, and state-owned open space will be conducted on the alternative(s) that advance, so that a similarly detailed impact minimization and mitigation plan is included in the FEIS/FEIR.	The state-listed species evaluations in Chapter 4.15 have been updated, taking comments and coordination with NHESP into consideration.
L-065.06	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	The Division requests that the FEIR/FEIS contain a comprehensive description of how the project proponent proposes to meet MESA regulatory requirements, including the standards for authorizing a take of a state-listed species through a Conservation & Management Permit, if applicable. This should include detailed information and discussion about rare species and wildlife crossing and barrier design (e.g. culverts and bridges), as well as other impact minimization measures such as construction management to minimize turtle and salamander mortality. Similarly, the FEIR/FEIS should also thoroughly address how the alternative(s) would meet the long term "net benefit" standard in 321 CMR 10.23 if applicable, including presenting, after consultation with the NHESP, mitigation proposals that are significantly more specific than those described in the DEIS/DEIR. Finally, we request that the EIR/EIS include detailed information about how the project proponent will mitigate impacts to vernal pools, general wildlife, and as discussed below, state-owned open space affected by the project.	Regulatory compliance is addressed in Chapter 8, while mitigation measures are summarized in Chapter 7.
L-065.07	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	24 named rivers and streams are potentially crossed or adjacent to the alternatives. For a list of species and fisheries survey results for each river or stream, please see Attachment 1.	The information was considered in the development of chapters 4.14 and 4.15.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.08	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	Stocked trout waters are highly susceptible to changes in water quality and/or quantity such as siltation, water level fluctuations, loss of riparian habitat and alterations of the temperature regime. Therefore, the project must not in any way diminish the ability of Beaver Brook, Rattlesnake Brook or the Wading River to support stocked trout.	Section 4.14.3 addresses fisheries. Beaver Brook and the Wading River are crossed by the Attleboro Alternative and are therefore not relevant to the alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR. Rattlesnake Brook is bridged by Route 24; the railroad which crosses above Route 24. The South Coast Rail project would not require replacement of the Rattlesnake Brook bridge, and have no impact on stocked trout.
L-065.09	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	Best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control must be adhered to for all phases of construction to minimize potential impacts to the fisheries resources. To the greatest extent practicable, all in stream work should be conducted during low flow periods throughout the year. Times of year when stream flow is high due to extended rain and/or snow melt events should be avoided. If the projects results in the replacement of existing culverts, the culvert replacement should meet the replacement recommendations found in the "Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards: Technical Guidelines, August 6, 2004" (the Standards) including, a minimum height of 6 feet, openness ratio of 0.5-0.75, natural bottom substrates through the crossing structure, and spanning 1.2 times the bank-full width to the greatest extent practical. If the project results in the placement of new culverts, the new crossing structure should, at minimum, meet the general standards for new crossing and strive for the optimum standards whenever possible including, a minimum height of 6 feet, openness ratio of 0.5-0.75, natural bottom substrates through the crossing structure, and spanning 1.2 times the bank-full width to the greatest extent practical. The Standards can be found at <a href="http://www.umass.edu/nrec/pdf_files/guidelines_river_stream_crossings.pdf">http://www.umass.edu/nrec/pdf_files/guidelines_river_stream_crossings.pdf</a> . Also, if the project will alter the streambed, we request that the existing grade be maintained.	Section 4.14.3 addresses best management practices to minimize stormwater impacts to fisheries. The BMPs for erosion and sedimentation control are described in detail in Section 4.17.3.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.10	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	<p>In addition to the NHESP's regulatory role, the Division manages Wildlife Management Areas ("WMAs") for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth. As discussed above, the Stoughton alternative would use an inactive railroad right of way that bisects the Hockomock Swamp WMA. As a result, the Stoughton alternative has the potential to adversely affect the quality of habitat within the WMA, and to impact public access and use.</p> <p>More specifically, the Division notes that the alternatives analysis provided in Section 3 of the DEIS/DEIR may understate the relative adverse impact to open space for the Stoughton Alternative by focusing exclusively on acreage of protected open space impacted. Given the ecological significance of the Hockomock, and the fact that the Stoughton Alternative will bisect the WMA resulting in significant wetland, habitat, and open space fragmentation, it is the Division's opinion that the Stoughton Alternative is likely to have a greater adverse impact to protected open space than the other alternatives, despite a potentially lower acreage impacted. For these reasons, the Division requests that the FEIR/FEIS contain a significantly more detailed and refined analysis of the scope of open space impacts associated with the Stoughton alternative's route through the Hockomock Swamp, including any impacts or infrastructure (e.g., access roads) related to the construction or ongoing maintenance of the trestle and railbed and right-of-way, as well as set forth a detailed plan to minimize and mitigate unavoidable open space impacts.. This more detailed impact analysis and mitigation plan should be completed for any other alternative(s) carried forward in the FEIR/FEIS.</p>	<p>Additional analysis has been completed for the FEIS/FEIR. Information on access and maintenance for the Hockomock trestle is provided in Appendix 3.2-C.</p> <p>Hockomock Swamp was originally bisected by the existing railroad grade, which was built in ca. 1863-66, and it remains so today, as evidenced by the fact that Atlantic white cedar habitat on the west side of the alignment abruptly ends at the railroad grade, and is replaced by red maple on the east side. The existing right of way is owned by MBTA and de facto public use of the ROW is not condoned by MassDOT. In fact, under current conditions, all-terrain vehicles regularly enter the WMA via the ROW, and cross through existing vernal pools in serpentine and circuitous routes thereby impacting the most vulnerable life stages of amphibians residing therein. Construction of South Coast Rail (and in particular the trestle) through Hockomock provides an opportunity to limit this ongoing damage to WMA resources.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-065.11	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife	<p>Given the Commonwealth's increased concern about the extent to which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions may impact the environment and our native flora and fauna, we request that the DEIS/DEIR provide a more comprehensive analysis of the extent to which the project will impact overall GHG emissions. This should include an analysis of GHG emissions associated with construction implementation as well as production of materials and supplies (e.g. trains, rails, ties, other building supplies). Finally, the Division recommends a coarse analysis of the GHG emissions associated with increases in secondary development attributed to the rail project. Although the current analysis shows a net decrease in GHG emissions associated with the project, to the extent that a more comprehensive analysis shows that the project alternatives result in a net increase in GHG emissions over the no build alternative, the Division recommends that any increase be offset through mitigation.</p>	<p>It is not possible to analyze construction-period GHG emissions at this state of design. Analysis of GHG emissions requires detailed information on construction phasing, equipment, and manpower, etc. Sections 5.3.4.8 details GHG impacts of induced development.</p> <p>The South Coast Rail project is expected to result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as compared to the No-Build Alternative. Mitigation measures are not necessary.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-066.01	Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries	<p>Many of the rivers and streams listed in Table 4.14-7 of the Biodiversity section of the DEISIDEIR provide passage and spawning habitat for diadromous fish species as well as winter flounder and various species of shellfish. Species identified for these rivers and streams and recommended time-of-year ('TOY) restrictions for in-water work in these systems are included below (Table 1). Recommended TOY restrictions are based on cross-referencing the rivers and streams identified in the DEISIDEIR with the recently released Recommended Time of Year Restrictions (TOYs) for Coastal Alteration Projects to Protect Marine Fisheries Resources in Massachusetts'. These restrictions may not be required if the proponent can demonstrate that the actual construction location is outside the area used by diadromous species (e.g., upstream of an obstruction to fish passage) or uses methods that will not affect fish passage or use of spawning riffles (e.g., containment structures). Recommended TOYs are included for the Fall season for several rivers to protect emigrating juveniles. 'These restrictions may not be required if the proposed work will not obstruct passage. There are efforts underway to improve the maps of fish passage and spawning locations which may be available in the next 12 months and can benefit the construction planning process.</p>	<p>Time of year restrictions are among the mitigation commitments, see chapter 4.14, Table 4.14-33.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-012.01	Massachusetts Historical Commission	<p>The Corps has requested the MHC's concurrence with the completeness of identification efforts for known but not for as-yet-unidentified historic properties, and with the Corps' preliminary determinations of eligibility and effect. Preliminary determinations of National Register eligibility and effects to previously identified historic properties are presented in DEIS/DEIR Sections 1.5.8 and 4.8. Recommendations for additional cultural resources identification and evaluation efforts for the project alternatives are also included in Section 4.8, and are noted in your letter.</p> <p>The Corps proposes to complete historic properties identification and evaluation efforts once a preferred alternative has been selected as a single corridor. The draft research design and methodology for intensive-level cultural resources survey for the preferred project alternative should be submitted to the MHC for review and comment.</p> <p>The MHC prefers to comment on the results of the identification and evaluation efforts and the Corps' effect determinations after the cultural resource surveys have been completed for the preferred alternative.</p>	USACE has been and will continue to consult with MHC.
L-012.02	Massachusetts Historical Commission	The presumption of adverse effect and mitigation is premature at this stage of project planning when several project alternatives are still in consideration, and with the identification and evaluation efforts, and the consultation process, not yet completed. The Final EIS/EIR should describe the relationship of consultation under 36 CFR 800.6 to the development of appropriate measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to significant historic properties, to more closely track the regulatory process of 36 CFR 800.	The consultation process and compliance with Section 106 is addressed in Chapter 4.8. The Corps has evaluated data provided by MassDOT's archaeologists and completed findings of eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and effects upon same, for known, above-ground historic properties. The Corps expects to address archaeological resources during further design and construction stages (if a permit is issued) through a Programmatic Agreement among the Corps, MassDOT, MHC and other consulting parties. A Draft PA is provided as Appendix 4.8-A.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-012.03	Massachusetts Historical Commission	<p>MHC also notes that mapping of historical architectural resources identified in DEIS/DEIR Volume II figures 4.8-1 to 4.8-29 are derived from 2009 cultural resources identification efforts. I</p> <p>Plans for track alignments, stations, layover facilities, track and electrical transmission infrastructure have been refined from the alternatives presented in the 2009 ENF (pg. 1-7). The currently proposed 2011 project alternatives are described in Section 1, and are shown in Section 4.5, 4.12 and 3.2 figures, including conceptual station and layover facilities impact areas and locations of traction power electrical transmission infrastructure. Project figures in the Final EIS/EIR should accurately present the preferred project alternative impact areas and their relationship to identified historical architectural resources.</p>	Updated figures are provided in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-092.01	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	<p>Early in the preparation of the DEIR/DEIS, the U.S. EPA requested that a hybrid alternative be evaluated. Although mentioned in the DEIR/DEIS, early evaluation quickly eliminated this as an alternative and it was not evaluated in detail.</p>	<p>A new alternative that combined the Middleborough Simple Rail Alternative (ENF Alternative 2) with the Rapid Bus Alternative (ENF Alternative 5) was evaluated at the request of EPA. The evaluation (provided in Appendix 3.1-B) indicated that complementing the low ridership of the Middleborough Simple Alternative with the ridership of the Rapid Bus Alternative would result in a combined ridership for the Hybrid Alternative less than that of the Rapid Bus Alternative by itself and just slightly more than the Middleboro Simple Alternative (which was already considered underperforming in terms of ridership). The combination alternative would require much of the infrastructure improvements needed for each individual alternative, resulting in a higher cost of the hybrid alternative than either the Rapid Bus Alternative or the Middleboro Simple Alternative. This would render the cost of the combination alternative not practicable considering costs and logistics in light of overall project purposes (i.e., fewer riders but higher cost of either Rapid Bus or Middleboro Simple alone). This alternative was therefore not advanced for further analysis in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-092.02	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	<p>The Whale’s Tooth station is the only rail station currently proposed for the New Bedford portion of the project that is within the coastal zone. While the proposed site is presently a paved parking lot, the construction of the rail station infrastructure and reconfiguration of the site present an opportunity to improve the site’s stormwater infrastructure to both minimize stormwater runoff and to treat, to the maximum extent possible, the remaining runoff. Given the significant idling time that trains are likely to spend at this location, attention should be given to the potential nonpoint source pollutants that may come from these trains. This proposed rail station will share some existing rail infrastructure with ongoing and future commercial/industrial freight rail uses. This rail station is also located across Herman Melville Boulevard from the New Bedford/Fairhaven Designated Port Area (DPA) of the port. With this in mind, it is important that proposed rail station activities and associated uses be compatible with the working waterfront characteristics of the area and able to coexist with industrial port uses. CZM and the City of New Bedford have worked closely with the MA DOT to ensure that the proposed rail activities were consistent with the June 14, 2010 state-approved New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor Plan Update. This plan identifies the Whale’s Tooth Parking Lot area as a future inter-modal transportation center, including commuter rail, freight rail, local and regional bus service, taxi and trolley service, and parking. As the future plans for this proposed rail station are developed in greater detail, it is necessary to regularly review the design details to ensure this compatibility is maintained. This compatibility concern is especially true for any future transit oriented development, particularly residential development that may be proposed as part of the project. CZM recommends that low-impact development techniques and practices be used, to the greatest extent possible, to reduce potential non-point source impacts.</p>	<p>Stormwater management measures and LID practices proposed at Whale’s Tooth Station are described in chapter 4.17 . MassDOT cannot dictate the use of LID practices in the development of parcels that surround the station sites when those sites are not controlled by MassDOT.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-092.03	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	<p>The Church Street Overnight Train Layover Facility site is outside the coastal zone and far from the harbor area. Therefore, this site can be assumed to have lower potential impacts on coastal resources and existing industrial port operations than the Wamsutta Overnight Train Layover Facility site, located adjacent to the proposed Whale's Tooth Rail Station and DPA uses. However, CZM recognizes that the Wamsutta site may have logistical, operational, or other characteristics that make it the preferred site over the Church Street location. If the Wamsutta site is selected for the overnight train layover facility, CZM recommends that attention be given to minimize non-point source pollutants from the layover facility and to, also, minimize any conflicts the layover facility might have with existing or potential future freight operations to and from the industrial port.</p>	<p>Stormwater management measures and LID practices proposed at the Wamsutta Layover Facility are described in Chapter 4.17. Drip trays are proposed beneath the ladder tracks and oil/grit separators will treat runoff from the facility prior to discharge to the municipal storm sewer system.</p> <p>The Whale's Tooth Station has been designed with multiple tracks to allow trains to pass, and will not interfere with existing or future freight operations.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-092.04	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	<p>Two rail stations are proposed within Fall River, Battleship Cove and Fall River Depot. The Battleship Cove station is within the coastal zone. It is adjacent to the Mount Hope Bay DPA, near an area of marine industrial activities and aging mill buildings. The DEIR/DEIS states that this station is partially within the DPA. However, CZM recently clarified its DPA boundary in this area and the station site is no longer in the DPA. This station is proposed to be a seasonal station designed to service walk-in and pick-up/drop-off customers. The Fall River Depot Station is partially within the coastal zone in an urban area of residential and commercial activity. It will be a year-round station that includes extensive parking facilities. Both proposed stations are relatively near the coastal waters of Mount Hope Bay, and station designs should include infrastructure and strategies to minimize stormwater runoff and to treat to the maximum extent possible the remaining stormwater runoff. Attention should also be given to the potential non-point source pollutants that may come from idling trains at the stations. Both proposed rail station will share a portion of the existing rail infrastructure that runs into the industrially developed portion of the waterfront. CZM recommends that accommodations be made to maintain any existing or potential future industrial/commercial freight rail activities that support the industrialized portion of the port. The Fall River Depot station is separated from the waterfront by several busy roadways. The city's harbor planning process from the late 1990's expressed a desire to allow a more pedestrian friendly access and reconnection to the waterfront from this area, and proposed a long-term strategy to reduce area traffic.</p>	<p>Stormwater management measures at Fall River Depot Station are described in Chapter 4.17 Stormwater management measures at Battleship Cove Station are described in Section 2.12. Compliance with the Coastal Zone Management Standards is discussed in this chapter as well.</p> <p>The Fall River Depot Station and the Battleship Cove Station have been designed with multiple tracks to allow trains to pass, and will not interfere with existing or future freight operations.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-092.05	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	The three proposed Fall River layover facilities are with the coastal zone, near the waters of Mount Hope Bay/Taunton River. While no layover facility is proposed within a FEMA Velocity Zone, a small portion of the Weaver's Cover West Layover Facility is within the FEMA Zone A 100 year floodplain. CZM recommends that the train layover facility selected be located outside of the FEMA Zone A. Given the projected sea-level rise and the long-term nature of this rail infrastructure, CZM also suggests that the proponent consider including a margin of safety to avoid a layover facility being located in a future elevated Zone A. Finally, CZM recommends that attention be given to minimizing non-point source pollutants from the layover facility as oils and grease that may accumulate from the layover and idling of multiple trains.	<p>The latest FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) were reviewed for each layover facility site in order to evaluate for potential impacts within the 100-year floodplain. According to the latest maps available from FEMA, neither site was found to be located within the 100-year floodplain. A copy of the latest FIRM for each site is included Appendix 4.17-C.</p> <p>Section 4.18.7 addresses planning for sea level rise. As described in the DEIS/DEIR, it is not practicable to locate the proposed stations and layover facilities at higher or more inland locations due to the location of the existing railroad infrastructure and the location of the populations being served.</p>
L-092.06	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	While the access road to the proposed South Main Street Rail station is within the coastal zone, the rail station itself is located just outside the coastal zone. As such, it is not likely to have significant impacts on coastal resources of the Taunton River. However, CZM recommends that non-point pollution from increased impervious areas be treated to the greatest degree possible, including Low-Impact Development techniques to reduce impervious areas where possible.	Detailed stormwater calculations, including peak runoff and pollutant removal rates, were completed for all station sites, layover facilities, and track elements with significant impervious areas. These rates are summarized presented in Chapter 4.17. Supporting calculations are provided in the stormwater reports in Appendices 4.17-A through C.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-092.07	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	CZM's review of Section 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, of the DEIR/DEIS, raised the following comments and suggestions. The DEIR/DEIS states that future public access to the shoreline may be restricted following construction of a layover facility at any of the three potential layover sites being considered in Fall River. CZM notes that mitigation for the lost public access may be required. The DEIR/DEIS also states that the Fall River Weaver's Cove West Layover Facility Site would likely need to be licensed under Chapter 91 as a temporary use. CZM recommends that the proponent investigate the potential for this facility to qualify for licensing as an accessory to water dependent industrial uses under 310 CMR 9.12(3). This approach to licensing would allow a longer license term than the 10 year license limit for a temporary use in a DPA. CZM recommends that the project proponent discuss these issues and options with DEP to receive a more definitive determination.	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further consideration.
L-092.08	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	The scientific understanding of the role of atmospheric nitrogen compounds, such as NOx, on the water quality of coastal embayments has improved in recent years. While the DEIR/DEIS included an air quality study, it did not explicitly discuss whether the various route alternatives, or the electric vs. diesel alternatives had any significant disadvantages or advantages from a nitrogen deposition perspective. CZM recommends that subsequent review documents address the nitrogen deposition to coastal embayments more explicitly.	Potential aerial deposition of nitrogen associated with diesel locomotives using the Stoughton Alternative is described in Sections 4.9.2.6 Stoughton Diesel Alternative, 4.9.2.10 Stations, and 4.9.2.11 Layover Facilities of the DEIS/DEIR. The electric locomotives proposed under the Stoughton Electric or Whittenton Alternatives do not emit air pollutants and would not have any air quality impacts on receptor locations.
L-092.09	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	The proposed project is subject to CZM federal consistency review, which requires that the project be found to be consistent with CZM's enforceable program policies. For further information on this process, please contact Bob Boeri, Project Review Coordinator, at 617-626-1050 or visit the CZM web site at <a href="http://www.mass.gov/czm">www.mass.gov/czm</a> .	Consistency review is addressed in Chapter 4.18.

## **Regional Organizations**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-007.01	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) is currently reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) submitted for the South Coast Rail Project (EEA #14346), which was released on March 23, 2011. As you are aware, the document is over 2,500 pages in length and contains an abundance of information related to the proposed project and associated benefits and impacts.</p> <p>I realize that the public forums scheduled for the first week of May will provide an opportunity to become more familiar with the proposed project and to provide testimony; however, the fact remains that a 2,500 page document needs to be read, digested, and discussed, in order to fully comprehend the complexities of the proposed project.</p> <p>At our most recent Old Colony Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meeting, it was voted unanimously to seek an extension of the public comment period. This project has far reaching benefits and impacts and therefore, it would be appropriate and reasonable that a project of this magnitude would have a lengthy public participation component and comment period.</p> <p>I thank you for your consideration of this request and the opportunity to comment on this project to ensure that it accomplishes its objectives with minimal environmental impacts.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.01	Old Colony Planning Council	Overall, the proposed project is consistent with the major planning efforts and documents of the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC). Specifically, the Old Colony Planning Council Regional Policy Plan encourages the creation of concentrated, mixed use developments; expanded housing opportunities; the preservation of open space; the provision of transportation choice; all of which have the potential to increase the number of jobs and business opportunities. In addition, the Regional Policy Plan supports projects which promote the use of public transportation rather than the Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV). This proposed project has the potential to provide the host communities with various smart growth opportunities, and therefore, is consistent with the planning objectives of Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC). The Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan which was produced to enhance the aforementioned opportunities provides a potential framework for partnership between the host communities and the proponent far into the future of the proposed project. As such, I strongly encourage the Commonwealth to continue supporting the host communities as well as the entire South Coast Region as the project impacts have been identified to be far reaching.	The consistency of the project with Old Colony Planning Council plans is acknowledged.
L-070.02	Old Colony Planning Council	The Old Colony MPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identifies the need of passenger rail service to the South Coast Region as well as to the Cape Cod Region. The restored commuter rail service on the Old Colony Lines has provided the connection to Boston for the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts and the resulting economic development is clear in some communities. However, in other communities, the experience has been less robust. Therefore, I caution and strongly urge the proponent to work closely with the communities of the South Coast Region in order to be responsive to their individual needs, desires, and concerns.	Implementation of the Corridor Plan is discussed in Section 5.5.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.03	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>In order to ensure an effective and open public participation process, MassDOT implemented a comprehensive community involvement process, which included an Interagency Coordinating Group; the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force; a civic engagement process; and an extensive project website. This public participation model was widely successful in identifying and addressing issues related to the proposed project before the release of the DEIS/DEIR document. Following the DEIS/DEIR release, MassDOT provided a memorandum that helped the reader understand the components of the document; however, I felt as though MassDOT could have done more in terms of helping host communities understand the potential impacts related to the proposed project. Considering that the FEIS/FEIR document might be the first chance that the host communities have the opportunity to review a Least Environmentally Damaging and Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), it seems reasonable that there be an extensive public outreach campaign in those communities following release of the LEDPA as well as an extended public comment period to allow for all aspects related to final design and mitigation to be identified and sufficiently resolved.</p>	<p>MassDOT is committed to ensuring comprehensive public awareness and understanding of this complex environmental document so the public and other interested parties can provide informed comments on substantive environmental issues to MEPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. MassDOT has published a “Readers’ Guide to the FEIS/FEIR” and a Fact Sheet that summarizes MassDOT’s understanding of this document’s main findings. These documents are available on the project website, <a href="http://www.mass.gov/southcoastrail">www.mass.gov/southcoastrail</a>. Information on public meetings will be posted on the website as well as through the local media and through the Project’s e-mail list.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.04	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>On April 27, 2011, Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) sent a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office asking for an extension on the public comment period. This request was sent in order to support our member communities with their review of this important document. As you are most certainly aware, the DEIS/DEIR document was released for public review during a very busy time of year for communities of the Commonwealth. The spring of every year is when the communities of the Commonwealth typically plan for town meetings and town departments are very busy determining budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. This 2,500 page document included a multitude of chapters containing technical information related to the impacts associated with the proposed project and the public was given sixty-five (65) days to review, comprehend, and provide comment.</p> <p>This put a great deal of pressure on host communities to conduct a comprehensive review of the 2,500 page document while making plans to address their upcoming fiscal year. In addition, the size of the document also made it difficult for those people of the Commonwealth, for whom, English may not be their primary language. Reading a document of that size and complexity is challenging for those who work in the planning, engineering, environmental, or transportation related fields and I suspect even harder for those who do not. Therefore, I strongly urge the proponent to consider an elongated comment period for the FEIS/FEIR, a thorough explanation of the complexity of the review process, as well as public meetings held in the host communities in order to fully engage those most closely affected by the proposed project. It is our conclusion that this sixty-five day period was insufficient and our hope is that when the FEIS/FEIR is released, more consideration is given to extending the comment period and a more robust outreach component.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p> <p>Pursuant to CEQ (NEPA) Regulations there is no comment period on a Final Environmental Impact Statement. However, the Commonwealth's MEPA process does have a comment period that applies to the FEIR. MassDOT intends to widely publicize the availability of the FEIS/FEIR when released and the date(s) and venue(s) of any public forums pursuant to its requirements under MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.05	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>The DEIS/DEIR document provided extensive examinations of eight (8) alternatives for the proposed project. The alternatives included in the DEIS/DEIR document included:</p> <p>1.) No-Build (Enhanced Bus) 2.) Attleboro Electric 3.) Attleboro Diesel 4.) Stoughton Electric 5.) Stoughton Diesel 6.) Whittenton Electric 7.) Whittenton Diesel and 8.) Rapid Bus. All of the alternatives were analyzed and descriptions of the benefits and impacts of each were included in the DEIS/DEIR. As required by the MEPA regulations, MassDOT selected the Stoughton family as the preferred alternative, thereby requesting that it be moved forward for in-depth analysis in the FEIS/FEIR document. OCPC encountered many residents and stakeholders whom did not fully comprehend the joint environmental review process and misunderstood the ramifications of such a selection. I recognize that MassDOT has made efforts to demonstrate the differences in the environmental review processes; however, I believe that more clarity on the subject would go a long way. As such, I strongly urge the proponent and the Army Corps of Engineers to continue to provide the public with documentation as well as public participation events in order to fully educate them as to the roles, responsibilities, timelines, and functions of the joint environmental review process.</p>	<p>Section 9.2 of the FEIS/FEIR includes a summary of MassDOT's proposed outreach activities.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.06	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>Grade crossings are important factors when dealing with the interactions of railroads and roadways. According to the DEIS/DEIR, there are numerous grade crossings along each of the alternatives, which have the potential to create conflicts between trains and vehicles and/or people. Since the Old Colony Line restoration (1997), there have been several accidents at grade crossings along the individual corridors. In addition, some communities benefit from quad-gates while others only have two gates which stop vehicles and people from crossing the tracks when a train is approaching or traveling through. I support the use of the Automatic Highway Crossing Warning (AHCW) Systems as mentioned in the DEIS/DEIR. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be consistency when it comes to what type of gates have been used on the Old Colony Lines, and therefore, I strongly urge the proponent to consider the use of quad-gates throughout the corridor to ensure the highest level of safety for the traveling public. In addition, I recommend that the proponent work closely with the abutters along the selected route to identify areas where crossings may be an issue and to mitigate their concerns.</p>	<p>At-grade crossing safety measures are discussed in Chapter 4.1.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.07	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>The Right-of-Way for the proposed project is of utmost concern to the towns of Easton and Stoughton. These communities are concerned with the following items as they relate to the proposed project: access, proper maintenance, safety, and security. The FEIS/FEIR should demonstrate who will be provided access to the ROW; where that access will exist; safety measures that will be in place to ensure that the integrity of the rail remains intact; security plans that identify whom will have authority of the ROW and how it will be protected; and lastly, maintenance plans which demonstrate how the proponent will be ensuring that aspects related but not limited to, drainage, structural integrity, and overall conditions of the ROW will be taken into account.</p> <p>In addition, the project proponent should include detail regarding how existing utilities will be impacted and mitigated as part of the construction of the proposed project.</p>	Portions of the right-of-way will be fenced (in developed areas) and properly maintained. Information on vegetation maintenance is provided in Chapter 4.14, information on stormwater management is provided in Chapter 4.17.
L-070.08	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>According to the DEIS/DEIR, MassDOT has chosen the Stoughton family of alternatives (electric &amp; diesel) which would extend the existing rail from the Stoughton station to Fall River and New Bedford. This alternative route presents challenges related to emergency response in that a substantial portion of the route will be in the Hockomock Swamp. As the Hockomock Swamp is considered an ACEC, impacts related to construction and operations must be minimized to the greatest extent possible; however, the DEIS/DEIR did not address how emergency response personnel will be able to access a possible accident should it occur in the swamp. As such, I strongly urge the proponent to include such information in the FEIS/FEIR filing and further identify potential access points along the proposed corridor.</p>	See Appendix 3.2-C, Hockomock Trestle Memo.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.09	Old Colony Planning Council	In addition, emergency response vehicles would need to respond to accidents should they occur within their communities. This proposed project presents challenges to the emergency response personnel in that should the train be blocking the roadway and thus, not allowing access to another part of a community, those personnel will not be able to respond to a call in a timely fashion. As such, I strongly recommend that the proponent work closely with the first responders of the host communities to properly and sufficiently describe how those situations will be avoided in the FEIS/FEIR.	A grade crossing safety and delay analysis is included in Chapter 4.1. MassDOT has committed to work with local officials to prioritize safety. In addition, testimonials from emergency responders along the Greenbush Line stated that introducing commuter rail operations in their communities has not affected their ability to respond promptly to their communities needs and a comprehensive public safety awareness program would be developed for the South Coast Rail communities, as was done for the Greenbush Line.
L-070.10	Old Colony Planning Council	The Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), at 16,950 acres, is the largest vegetated wetland system in Massachusetts. If the Stoughton Alternative is selected there will be a variety of impacts within the Hockomock Swamp, which is a concern. One concern raised by the Town of Easton is ability to access the rail line within the Hockomock Swamp in case of an emergency or for routine maintenance. The DEIS/DEIR does not mention how emergency crews will be able to access the rail line in case of an emergency. If emergency access roads are created that could potentially add another level of impact to the Hockomock Swamp. Additional concerns from the Town of Easton are the potential archeological sites within the Swamp that date back 9,000 years, as it was a place of significance to the Wampanoag Native American Tribe. The project proponent should look at conducting pre-construction studies to if any archeological sites will be disrupted because of the rail line.	<p>See Appendix 3.2-C, Hockomock Trestle Memo for information on access to the trestle. No access roads are required.</p> <p>Chapter 7, Proposed Mitigation and MassDOT Proposed Section 61 Findings, includes a commitment by MassDOT to develop cultural resources mitigation measures during preliminary and final design.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.11	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>According to the DEIS/DEIR, if the Stoughton alternative is chosen, it would have the least amount of environmental impact, but the fact remains it still travels through the Hockomock Swamp, a state designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) as well as the Pine Swamp in Raynham. The Town of Easton is concerned with wildlife crossing the track, not only within the ACEC and Pine Swamp, but also through other heavily vegetated areas, where animals, especially deer may cross the track. Deer crossing could lead to deer being hit by a train or causing an accident. This situation may be mitigated with the installation of fencing throughout the Hockomock and Pine Swamps as well as any area populated by deer. In an effort to mitigate impacts on the 13 rare and endangered species within the Hockomock Swamp the project proponent should look at conducting pre-construction studies to determine population size, distribution, or usage of the rail bed in an effort to finalize mitigation measures. The Town of Stoughton also had concerns with the proposed rail being adjacent to the Charles W. Welch Memorial Fish and Game Preserve, which is directly off of Route 138. I urge the proponent to work closely with the potential host communities to address their concerns related to wildlife areas in and around the selected route and provide suitable mitigation.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 provides information on wildlife crossings. Fencing of the right-of-way is proposed in developed areas only. A deer hitting the train would not normally be expected to derail a train or cause an accident.</p> <p>Special status species mitigation is discussed in Chapter 4.15.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.12	Old Colony Planning Council	The Town of Easton has a number of water concerns with the proposed Stoughton alternative going through Easton, particularly the impact on the water supply within the community. All of Easton's water comes from wells within the ground and there is a particular concern with the well located off Gary Lane in Easton. The rail bed is directly adjacent to the well and the Town is concerned with pollutants from the train seeping into the ground and affecting the quality of drinking water as well as maintenance concerns at the pumping station from this particular well. I request that the proponent work closely with the potential host communities in an effort to identify water resource issues and properly mitigate the effects of the proposed project on those areas.	Water resource impacts and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 4.17.
L-070.13	Old Colony Planning Council	The most prominent visual concern is the construction of an overhead catenary system if the electric option is chosen. The presence of a catenary system, while more energy efficient, may be considered clutter and/ or a visual detriment to the communities, as a majority of the lines transverse residential, commercial and forested areas. As such, a hybrid option which would use the overhead catenary system in outlying areas and diesel-electric in design-sensitive urban areas should be analyzed in order to be responsive to the concerns of the potential host communities. The DEIS/DEIR states that the visual impact to the proposed Easton Village station would be substantial due to the construction of train station and clearing of vegetation if the Stoughton Alternative (diesel or electric is chosen). The proposed Easton Village and existing Stoughton stations are examples of locations where substantial visual impacts would occur and have the potential to adversely impact the potential host communities. Therefore, I strongly advise the project proponent to work closely with all of the potential host communities to address these concerns regarding the visual impacts related to the overhead catenary systems.	<p>Visual impacts and mitigation are discussed in Chapter 4.5. Input from the communities has been considered throughout the environmental review process and will continue through final design.</p> <p>Dual-mode operations are not practicable because of the impacts on trip times, and the additional capital and operating costs. It takes 60 to 90 seconds to switch between diesel and electric modes on the dual-mode engines. If this mode were selected to reduce visual impacts to historic resources, the diesel mode would be used from Canton Center to Raynham Station, requiring two mode-changes. This would add 2 to 3 minutes to the run time for the trip.</p> <p>There is also a significant additional cost associated with dual mode technology. The dual mode engines cost approximately \$12 million (approximately double the cost of a single diesel or electric engine). The SCR service would require 10 engines, a cost increase of approximately \$60 M. Neither the MBTA nor Amtrak currently has a maintenance facility capable of maintaining dual-mode engines. A separate facility would likely be required.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.14	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>The DEIS/DEIR defines cultural resources as archeological sites as well as historic buildings, structures and districts. There are a number of these cultural resources in close vicinity to the proposed rail line. Some of the more prominent cultural resources that are of concern include the Stoughton Train Station building. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the station has been closed and boarded up since 2009. I strongly encourage the proponent to work with the Town to restore the station to make it become a centerpiece of the Stoughton's downtown area. The station could serve multiple purposes including housing a ticket booth and coffee shop, but more importantly as a shelter to protect people who are waiting for the train from inclement weather. The Town of Easton also had concerns with a number of cultural resources, namely the North Easton Historic District, which is a National Historic Landmark District adjacent to the proposed Easton Village Station. The North Easton Historic District houses a number of architecturally and historically significant buildings which should be preserved regardless of what alternative is chosen. Another cultural resource within the Town of Easton is the Hockomock Swamp; as it is a place of potential cultural significance for the Wampanoag Native American Tribe and it should be studied further to determine the extent of the archeological significance of the site.</p> <p>These cultural resources have the potential to be impacted in some capacity, either visually impacted or by noise and vibration, but I strongly encourage the project proponent to address the concerns posed by the communities of Easton and Stoughton about these cultural resources within their communities.</p>	<p>Historic resource impacts are discussed in Chapter 4.8 and a draft programmatic agreement specifying mitigation measures is provided in Appendix 4.8-A.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.15	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>There are a number of concerns as to what the sound impacts will be along the proposed commuter rail line. According to the DEIS/DEIR, the Town of Easton will be the second most affected community in the report in terms of moderate and severe noise impacts. One of the more prominent concerns is the noise impact occurring from the locomotive warning horns, especially during early morning hours. Additional concerns include the locomotive and rail car noise when passing structures within close proximity of the rail line. The Town of Easton noted that noise impacts would be most severe at the proposed Easton Village Station, as that station is situated in a densely developed residential neighborhood. I strongly advise the project proponent to work with the Town of Easton to address these concerns regarding the increased noise level through a variety of mitigation measures including the installation of four quadrant gates where appropriate to reduce the need of locomotive warning horns, as well as the use of noise barriers and noise insulation in and around structures as needed.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.6 identified areas where noise walls or building sound insulation would be installed to address severe noise impacts. Quiet zones to mitigate train horn noise are not proposed at this time, although are discussed as a possible mitigation measure in Chapter 4.6.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.16	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>According to the DEIS/DEIR there are approximately 29 residences in the communities of Easton and Stoughton that would be impacted by vibration levels that range from 80-86 VdB, which is above the annoyance criteria of 80 VdB set by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These vibration impacts could be possibly mitigated with the installation of rubber ballast mats, which could reduce the vibration impacts from 3-10 VdB. Even with the installation of the rubber ballast mats, some residences may still be above the FTA annoyance limit of 80 VdB. Additional mitigation measures should be examined to address any residence impacted above the 80 VdB annoyance threshold. The Town of Easton has an additional concern about the potential effects of vibrations, particularly on the Historic Train Station, which is currently the home of the Easton Historical Society. While the DEIS/DEIR states that station is below the 100 VdB threshold for damage to fragile and historic structures, the Town is concerned with the effects of vibrations from the commuter rail on the station over the approximate 100 year life span of the project. I strongly advise the project proponent to conduct a baseline assessment of existing historic structures located on the selected route area to determine vibration impacts.</p>	<p>Vibration impacts were assessed in accordance with FTA procedures and criteria, the federal agency with special expertise in these issues. The analysis showed vibration levels would be below damage thresholds, therefore a baseline survey of historic structures is not required.</p> <p>We also note that most historic properties (including the historic Old Colony Railroad Station) were constructed in the context of active passenger and freight railroad operations at that time, and that modern, continuously welded track is more capable of ameliorating vibration effects than were tracks constructed at that time, notwithstanding the higher operating speeds of modern trains.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.17	Old Colony Planning Council	In regards to land use issues, the Town of Easton has expressed concern about the Stoughton Alternative passing through the Southeastern Regional Vocation High School complex, specifically a number of sports fields that would need to be relocated. I encourage the project proponent to work with the Town of Easton and school officials to come up with a plan to relocate these fields to another location around the school complex. In addition, the town of Stoughton has substantial concerns related to the impact that the proposed project will have on the downtown area. Currently, the rail spur terminates just south of the downtown and the historic rail station is closed and not functioning as a shelter for patrons of the commuter rail system. The issues related to potential land uses in and around the potential rail line are items that I urge the proponent to continue to work closely with the potential host communities in order to ensure that the proposed project provides for positive economic development opportunities.	The acquisition at the school complex would consist of a 0.5 acre part of a sports field. The sports field would not be relocated by MassDOT.
L-070.18	Old Colony Planning Council	Unfortunately, it is noted that the Brockton Area Transit (BAT) was omitted from the discussion of bus service in the study area. Importantly, BAT provides bus service that extends into the towns of Easton and Stoughton, which are potential host communities, should the Stoughton route be ultimately selected. Therefore, I urge the proponent to include BAT in all discussions related to bus service and consult with them related to potential service enhancements.	Chapter 4.1, Transportation, describes the bus service offered by BAT in relationship to the South Coast Rail project. Further coordination with bus service providers will be part of the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.19	Old Colony Planning Council	The transportation section of the DEIS/DEIR presented findings for all of the proposed alternatives and provided a good baseline conditions analysis that should be included in the FEIS/FEIR document. The FEIS/FEIR should also include a more detailed analysis of transportation impacts related to the selected route which would include all aspects analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR. In addition, the FEIS/FEIR should include detailed site plans that include the following; but not limited to: trip distribution assignments, potential parking areas, intersection LOS, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Overall, the transportation section of the DEIS/DEIR was informative; however, without a selected route, it was difficult to assess the potential impacts as the section did not provide a detailed impact study for each potential station location. As such, I strongly urge the proponent to continue to work with the host communities and to provide public involvement opportunities once an alternative is chosen in order to ensure that all aspects related to transportation impacts are identified and properly mitigated.	Station impacts were analyzed in detail and presented by Town. The analyses have been updated where appropriate based on changes in the station locations since the DEIS/DEIR.
L-070.20	Old Colony Planning Council	Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are essential to the success of the smart growth potential of the proposed project. The DEIS/DEIR discussed potential improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians; however, lacked specific plans related to the design and implementation of those improvements. As such, the FEIS/FEIR should include bicycle and pedestrian circulation site plans, which should include, but not be limited to: conceptual station site sidewalk locations; crosswalk locations, and bicycle lanes and secure storage areas in order to ensure that the project provides for safe and realistic bicycle and pedestrian travel.	These details would be determined in final design.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.21	Old Colony Planning Council	<p>Future public transportation connections are an important component for this proposed transportation project. Large public transportation vehicles are harder to maneuver, require more space, operate on their own schedule, and therefore, require different provisions than a passenger motor vehicle. As such, the local Regional Transit Authorities (Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT), Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) and Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)) must be involved in the station and conceptual design discussions and the fixed route interconnectivity analyses and planning. This effort should include all three (3) transit providers as their individual service areas continue to expand.</p> <p>In addition, private transportation providers such as Plymouth &amp; Brockton and Bloom also provide valuable commuter services and therefore, should also be considered in these discussions, analyses and planning efforts. Transit services should be designed and funded, if feasible, for the areas in order to support the usage of the proposed project. In addition, innovative services connecting the proposed stations to the points of interest in the local communities should also be included, while encouraging local employers near proposed stations to partner with the MassRIDES program to promote ridesharing and carpooling.</p>	Coordination with bus service providers will be part of the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-070.22	Old Colony Planning Council	In recent years, OCPC has documented a steady decrease in the parking demand for the commuter rail lots along the Old Colony Lines. This decreasing trend could be attributed to a variety of factors, such as: high unemployment, an increase in carpooling or drop-offs, and/ or more people choosing to drive to work instead of using public transportation. Clearly, without in-depth analyses, the list of possibilities remain on the table; however, one item that OCPC has documented is the increase in number of private parking lots in close proximity to the existing commuter rail lots providing cheaper rates for patrons of the commuter rail system. As such, I recommend that the proponent work closely with the host communities and the surrounding business owners in order to avoid the trends currently happening on the Old Colony Lines.	Coordination with local departments and abutters will be part of the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project.
L-070.23	Old Colony Planning Council	The DEIS/DEIR included information related to expected ridership for the different alternatives; however, the numbers are based on 2007 Regional Transportation Plans information and therefore, the FEIS/FEIR should include updated ridership numbers reflecting forecasts included in the most recent plans currently under development and to be finalized later this summer. In addition, I encourage the proponent to include a section outlining the effect of declining ridership due to potential poor on-time performance of the proposed project.	Updated ridership analyses are presented in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-070.24	Old Colony Planning Council	I have concerns related to the environmental review of the proposed project. Although the idea of a streamlined review is a good one, there also exists potential to create confusion and skepticism related to the proposed project. I strongly urge to the project proponent to consider an extensive public participation outreach campaign and extended comment period following the release of the FEIS/FEIR.	See response to comment L-070.04 for a description of proposed FEIS/FEIR public outreach.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.01	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>To facilitate review of the South Coast Rail Project under MEPA and inform the scope of study necessary for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), MassDOT is required by the MEPA office to identify a preferred corridor in the state portion (DEIR) of the joint DEIS/DEIR. In the Preface to the DEIS/DEIR, MassDOT has identified the Stoughton family of alternatives as the Commonwealth's preferred corridor for the South Coast Rail Project. A preferred mode for the Stoughton family of alternatives remains to be specified.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) concurs with MassDOT's recommendation. Based on the DEIS/DEIR's findings, the Stoughton Electric Alternative meets all project purpose measures to the greatest degree, followed closely by the Stoughton Diesel Alternative. However, it is important to note that achieving the greatest benefits and least environmental impacts of this project will require implementation of the "high" smart growth scenario outlined in the DEIS/DEIR and based on the findings of the South Coast Rail Economic and Land Use Corridor Plan.</p>	<p>The Preface to the FEIS/FEIR and Chapter 3 identify the Stoughton Alternative as MassDOT's preferred alternative. MassDOT has not identified a preferred mode (diesel or electric).</p>
L-093.02	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>As required by the USEPA's Section 404 (b)(I) Guidelines, the Army Corps of Engineers will determine the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) after receiving public comment on the DEIS/DEIR. MAPC looks forward to a continued transparent review process in which a preferred alternative is selected in the next phase of EIS/EIR review.</p>	<p>USACE's alternatives analysis supporting the LEDPA identification is provided in Section 3.3.4.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.03	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>MAPC is generally supportive of the South Coast Rail project. The Fall River-New Bedford area is currently the only major urban area in eastern Massachusetts not served by commuter rail. The South Coast area is densely developed, but also has extensive under-realized commercial, industrial, and housing opportunities. Expansion of the commuter rail to this area will improve residents' access to jobs and services, while providing a more affordable housing supply to employees of Metro Boston, and improve the viability of industrial and commercial enterprises in Metro Boston, in the South Coast cities, and at station locations along the line. Expanded transit service to developed urban areas is essential to the health and growth of the Commonwealth and is a core element of MAPC's MetroFuture Plan.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-093.04	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>In order to ensure that project benefits are maximized and any negative impacts are minimized and mitigated, the following attachment summarizes the issues that need to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR in greater detail. The key areas of concern include: developing and implementing a Finance Plan, impacts on South Station, construction impacts to commuter rail and freight service, and developing and implementing a Parking Plan.</p> <p>Many of the issues raised in this letter were previously addressed in MAPC's comment letter addressing the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and in the Secretary's Certificate on the Environmental Notification Form for the South Coast Rail Project.</p>	See responses to comments L-093.05 through L-093.40 for the detailed response to each of these issues.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.05	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Developing a finance plan is a critical component to implementing a successful project. A detailed finance plan that includes the potential to share costs with potential partners (i.e., Amtrak, MBTA, Mass Coastal, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and CSX) needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR. The FEIS/FEIR should include a comprehensive exploration of potential cost savings and improved services through these types of partnerships. If the proponent hasn't done so already, MAPC recommends pursuing funding opportunities that may be available through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).	Neither the Corps nor the federal cooperating agencies are proposing or providing funding of this project to date. Project finance issues are not a required component of an EIS/EIR under NEPA and MEPA. MassDOT is working on finance plan, but the details of project financing are beyond the scope of the EIS/EIR.
L-093.06	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	MAPC suggests that the Secretary require the DEIS/DEIR also include information on... 1. Contributions by owners and developers. To what degree, in what ways, and at what times will owners and developers along the route contribute to the costs of the project, either through repayment of bonds or other financing mechanisms? What form will these repayments take, e.g., District Improvement Financing (DIF)?	Project finance issues are not a required component of an EIS/EIR under NEPA and MEPA. MassDOT is working on finance plan, but the details of project financing are beyond the scope of the EIS/EIR.
L-093.07	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	MAPC suggests that the Secretary require the DEIS/DEIR also include information on... 2. Project phasing. Would it be possible to phase implementation of the project, such as sequential completion of lines south of Boston, eventually reaching both Fall River and New Bedford? Phasing should not indicate a lack of commitment to the full project, but it may make accomplishment of this expensive project more practicable in a period of federal retrenchment from public transit.	Project phasing would generate high capital cost in the beginning and low ridership and would not be consistent with the project purpose as the implementation of the completed project would extend substantially further into the future.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.08	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>3. Interim steps to improve mobility. What mechanisms could be employed to improve transit service to some of the destinations along the route in the short term, through mechanisms others than commuter rail expansion? Improvement of bus service accompanied by multi-modal facilities along the route could provide a measurable improvement in service in the shorter term, at less cost than the entire project. We are pleased that the Smart Growth Corridor Plan already calls for the development of multi-modal centers at key sites along the line, and we are also pleased that MassDOT is engaged in conversations with the Southeast Regional Transit Authority (SERTA) regarding multi-modal options in the vicinity of the Whale's Tooth station in New Bedford. Advancing some of these elements more quickly could help to catalyze development while improving regional mobility even before the new line goes into effect. Again, these recommendations are made not out of any desire to delay the project or to truncate its full completion, but rather to ensure that residents receive a measurable level of service improvement speedily.</p>	<p>Recommendations for improving existing bus service under the No-Build condition are provided in Chapter 3.</p>
L-093.09	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>4. Electric v. diesel alternative. While MAPC is eager to move the commuter rail system to electric power as soon as possible, there may be financial implications to the choice. These factors could have a bearing on the feasibility of the project. Therefore, the financing plan should compare the financial implications of the two alternatives. If the electric alternative is chosen, a clear way of financing it should be outlined. If the diesel alternative is chosen, a long-term plan to move to electric should be provided.</p>	<p>The capital and operating costs of the alternatives are disclosed in Chapter 3. Project finance issues are not a required component of an EIS/EIR under NEPA and MEPA. MassDOT is working on finance plan, but the details of project financing are beyond the scope of the EIS/EIR.</p>
L-093.10	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>5. State of Good Repair. Once complete, the South Coast Rail project needs to remain in a State of Good Repair, a critical component for providing safe and reliable service for riders in addition to providing a foundation for future growth. State of Good Repair programs include promoting system maintenance and implementing innovative financing strategies. Please outline plans for the State of Good Repair in your FEIS/FEIR.</p>	<p>MassDOT is in the process of developing a Finance Plan independent of this project, but which includes a proposed funding/financing plan for the South Coast Rail project. The MBTA manages their projects and prioritizes capital investment for rehabilitation and repair based on the needs of the entire agency.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.11	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Although the majority of the project's new stations and track will be built outside of the MAPC region, we are concerned about the impacts that construction and new service will have on the existing rail system within the region. The FEIS/FEIR needs to evaluate the Stoughton Alternatives' construction and operation impacts to South Station, even though we understand that the Stoughton Alternatives will only add four new trains per day.	Expansion of South Station is anticipated as part of the No-Build condition (regardless of whether the South Coast Rail project is built). The South Station Expansion is anticipated to provide sufficient capacity for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternative service.
L-093.12	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Commuter rail service at South Station is currently restricted by the number of tracks that can be placed within its existing footprint. Independent of the South Coast Rail project, MassDOT is undertaking a project to construct seven new terminal tracks at South Station to accommodate existing and projected future demand for commuter rail service. MAPC understands that the new terminal tracks will be constructed prior to the operation of the South Coast Rail project, and we would like that commitment to be confirmed by the Secretary in the FEIS/FEIR, based upon commitment from MassDOT. What is the anticipated completion date for the new terminal tracks and what measures are being taken to ensure that both projects are coordinated? How will the addition of seven new terminal tracks at South Station affect existing service along the Stoughton Line?	The South Station capacity enhancements are planned by the Commonwealth and MBTA regardless of the South Coast Rail project. The South Station has independent utility. MassDOT is currently developing preliminary designs and MEPA/NEPA documentation for the South Station Expansion Project, funded by the Federal Railroad Administration through a High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program grant.
L-093.13	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	According to the DEIS/DEIR, train frequency from Canton Junction station to Stoughton station along the existing MBTA Stoughton Commuter Rail Line alignment ranges from 17 roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. The FEIS/FEIR needs to summarize the number of existing and forecasted freight and passenger trips during the weekday and weekends. Specific attention to the number of existing and future passenger trips at South Station needs to be included.	Existing and future passenger trips are provided in Chapter 3. Freight trips are expected to remain as they currently operate.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.14	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	South Station Air Rights, a significant development project above South Station, proposes 1.375 million square feet office space, 170,000 square feet of residential space, 200 hotel rooms, and over 930 parking spaces. The FEIS/FEIR should explain specifically how the construction of this project, which has already been approved by the Board of Directors of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, affects South Coast Rail and adding track space at South Station. The FEIS/FEIR should also provide an update as the practicality and likely timetable for this development in light of current and project economic conditions.	The details of South Station air rights are not relevant to the environmental review of the South Coast Rail Project. The South Station expansion project is independent of and compatible with future station overbuild. Sufficient track space is anticipated to be available as a result of the South Station Expansion Project, currently undergoing environmental review. See Section 3.2.3.3.
L-093.15	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Every attempt should be made to ensure that existing commuter rail and freight service is not disrupted while construction is underway. MAPC's comment letter for the South Coast Rail's ENF asked for a "comprehensive explanation of impacts on current commuter rail service during construction." While the DEIS/DEIR addressed construction impacts related to household income and land acquisition requirements, an explanation of impacts on current commuter rail and freight service during construction was not included. The FEIS/FEIR needs to address this issue with particular focus on traffic impacts related to at-grade crossings and bridge reconstruction sites. This request is also mentioned on page 23 of the Secretary's Certificate, "The DEIR should include a detailed analysis of...impacts associated with roadway intersection and bridge reconstruction associated with the rail alternatives."	Chapter 4.1 discusses construction impacts and staging for at-grade crossings.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.16	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The following question pertaining to freight needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR:</p> <p>Acknowledgement that the policies and programs in MassDOT's Massachusetts State Rail and Freight Plans (September 2010) are consistent with the South Coast Rail program.</p>	<p>The South Coast Rail project is consistent with the State Rail and Freight Plans, and certain components of the project are integral. The TIGER-funded bridge replacements in New Bedford are compatible with South Coast Rail, but are a separate project with independent utility. They are intended to complete necessary maintenance for the active R.O.W. serving existing freight trains on the New Bedford Main Line, regardless of South Coast Rail. The project did not entail discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States and therefore it did not require authorization by the Corps. The bridge replacement project is identified as a baseline condition as part of the South Coast multi-modal improvements.</p>
L-093.17	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The following question pertaining to freight needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR:</p> <p>What is the existing number of freight trips in the South Coast region and when do they occur?</p>	<p>Existing and future freight service are well described in the State Rail and Freight Plans; the South Coast Rail project will not interfere with freight service. Market conditions will drive the number, frequency, and timing of freight rail trips. Also see Section 4.1.3.1 of the FEIS/FEIR for information on existing freight service. Proposed freight operating windows are provided in Table 3.2-8.</p>
L-093.18	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The following question pertaining to freight needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR:</p> <p>Is freight service in the South Coast region forecast to increase, decline or remain the same?</p>	<p>Existing and future freight service are described in the State Rail and Freight Plans; the South Coast Rail project will not interfere with freight service. Market conditions will drive the number, frequency, and timing of freight rail trips. Also see Section 4.1.3.1 of the FEIS/FEIR for information on existing freight service. Proposed freight operating windows are provided in Table 3.2-8. The South Coast Rail project will improve the tracks that freight service uses; however, the purpose of the project is not to improve freight service, thus the benefits were not quantified.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.19	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The following question pertaining to freight needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR:</p> <p>How exactly would freight service benefit from the implementing the Stoughton Alternative?</p>	<p>The South Coast Rail project would not have any negative effects on freight service. As described in the State Rail and Freight Plans, rail freight service may benefit by having improved railroads that allow for increased speed. However, any increase in freight rail speed is not part of the proposed project. No freight train usage of the (currently out of service) Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road in Taunton is planned or anticipated at this time. The South Coast Rail project will improve the tracks that freight service uses; however, the purpose of the project is not to improve freight service, thus the benefits were not quantified.</p>
L-093.20	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The following question pertaining to freight needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR:</p> <p>Page 4.1-75 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>Under the Stoughton Alternative the current and future proposed freight operation splits the proposed main line. As a result, this sets up conflicts between operating passenger trains and freight trains during the same period of time.</p> <p>What are potential solutions to resolve these conflicts?</p>	<p>Although future freight demand was not modeled as part of the project, future operating windows for freight trains were included. Freight trains would be allowed to operate on the sections of track listed in Table 3.2-8, during the times specified. Each segment provides at least 10 hours per day of freight operations, typically in 1-hour windows during the day. These windows will allow existing freight customers to continue to receive goods via freight train service and eliminate conflicts between freight and passenger train operations.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.21	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The following question pertaining to freight needs to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR: Page 4.1-77 of the DEIS/DEIR states: Presently, the only access to the remaining active freight rail customers on the existing Stoughton Branch is via the Northeast Corridor through Canton Junction. This need to access the high-speed corridor will definitely be impacted by the coming of the high-speed train service. The MBTA may or may not grant a freight carrier access to the Canton area through the proposed reconstructed line between Winter Street, Taunton, and the present location of end-of-track in Stoughton.</p> <p>How will this impact freight and commuter train service for the Stoughton Alternative?</p>	<p>MBTA does not intend to grant freight carriers access to the Canton area from the south, using the portion of the Stoughton Line that would be reconstructed for the South Coast Rail project. Freight service to Canton is currently provided from the north side, and future High-Speed Rail service on the Northeast Corridor is expected to take into consideration potential conflicts with freight service sharing the corridor.</p>
L-093.22	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>Are there additional issues regarding freight service once a Stoughton Alternative is implemented? If so, how should they be addressed?</p>	<p>Freight service is not part of the South Coast Rail project. Existing freight operations are as described in the DEIS/DEIR, and changes in response to market conditions rather than MassDOT's control. Such changes are not reasonably foreseeable and thus did not need to be addressed in the EIS/EIR.</p>
L-093.23	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>Provide an overall explanation of the impacts on Amtrak service along the corridor. How would the preferred Alternative benefit or impair Amtrak service?</p>	<p>Neither the Stoughton Alternative nor the Whittenton Alternative would affect Amtrak service.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.24	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The FEIS/FEIR needs to contain a detailed parking plan for the Stoughton Alternatives. The plan needs to consider not only legitimate parking needs, but also other Commonwealth goals, such as reducing impermeable surfaces and allowing adequate space for transit-oriented development (TOD). At a minimum, the parking plan needs to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conversion of excess parking at stations to more useful economic development or TOD uses.</li> <li>- Consideration for structured parking at stations to allow more space for TOD development.</li> <li>- Programs for off-hours/weekend use of the commuter rail lots to serve as parking to bolster economic development activities in the communities.</li> <li>- Description of any additional private land acquisitions that would be necessary to accommodate parking, along with the commensurate impacts of those land purchases.</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed station parking plans are provided in Chapter 3 as Figures 3.2-20 through 3.2-32. Stormwater management features, including impermeable surface areas, are discussed in Chapter 4.17. Station plans were developed based on ridership projections and consistent with the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan (The Corridor Plan). The South Coast communities would implement the initiatives set in the Corridor Plan through a MassDOT commitment to provide technical assistance as part of Executive Order 525.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.25	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>MAPC is pleased to see the findings and recommendations of the Smart Growth Corridor Plan integrated into the DEIS/DEIR and expects that these will be maintained in the FEIS/FEIR. Achieving the benefits of the smart growth scenario described in the DEIS/DEIR will depend on the implementation of the actions outlined on page 5-27, which were drawn from Chapter 7, Implementation of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan. One of the most important of these actions is the funding of technical assistance to municipalities to support the development and adoption of plans, zoning, development review procedures, and other programs and policies necessary to support smart growth and transit-oriented development. Many of these communities lack the resources they need to implement these kinds of activities, but achieving the benefits of the smart growth scenario depends on their ability to do so. The Commonwealth has committed \$300,000 each year for the past three years in technical assistance and MassDOT's Preface to the DEIS/DEIR states that annual technical assistance is expected to continue during the project development phase. The FEIS/FEIR should clarify the specific timeframes and amount of funding commitments for this continued technical assistance.</p>	<p>The Corridor Plan's suggested actions for the state and regional planning agencies and municipalities are detailed in Chapter 5. Specific timeframes and funding commitments are the responsibility of the municipalities and certain state agencies, not MassDOT.</p> <p>Section 5.5 describes the metrics that track state investments in land and infrastructure within the South Coast Region that are consistent with the Corridor Plan.</p>
L-093.26	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>Another critical element of smart growth is the identification and mitigation of regional impacts when building major new infrastructure. This should certainly be the case in regard to South Coast Rail. We ask the Secretary to ensure that the FEIS/FEIR specifically call out impacts that are likely to affect more than one municipality, and to require that the proponent determine mechanisms to mitigate those impacts, just as surely as the proponent would respond to impacts that might be brought to its attention by a single city or town.</p>	<p>Regional impacts were considered in the indirect and cumulative impact analyses presented in Chapter 5. As these developments are outside the control of MassDOT and USACE, requiring mitigation measures for impacts of future development would not be reasonable. The impacts of future development can be minimized through efforts of local governments to implement the Corridor Plan.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.27	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>Finally, we note that the Commonwealth's infrastructure investment in the South Coast Rail region is now governed by Executive Order 525 which directs state agencies to invest state funds in a manner consistent with the Corridor Plan. We urge the Secretary to require that the FEIS/FEIR explain how all investments related to the development of South Coast Rail – as well as investments to mitigate adverse impacts – are consistent with the Corridor Plan and the Corridor Map accompanying that Plan. This requirement would be entirely consistent with the requirement in EO 525 that "a web-based tracking system will be developed to track investment decisions and ensure that policy decisions are transparent." Furthermore, in order to ensure such transparency, it is essential that each state agency engaged in land use and infrastructure investment in the South Coast Region release to the public its implementation strategies to comply with the Executive Order. Both MassDOT and EOEEA should release these strategies as addenda to the FEIS/FEIR.</p>	<p>Section 5.5 describes the metrics that track state investments in land and infrastructure within the South Coast Region that are consistent with the Corridor Plan.</p>
L-093.28	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>In the discussion of indirect impacts associated with the South Coast Rail project, the DEIS/DEIR correctly notes that a smart growth scenario significantly reduces the project's indirect environmental impacts. By concentrating new development in identified areas, particularly those around existing and proposed commuter rail stations, the amount of land impacted by induced development, and the related environmental impacts of that development, are reduced. In the discussion of these indirect impacts though, the DEIS/DEIR does not discuss the potential of displacement of Environmental Justice populations in the vicinity of these stations. The FEIS/FEIR should explain how displacement will be avoided. This may include anti-displacement studies, which are among the potential uses of technical assistance funds under the South Coast Rail Plan, as well as specific state or local actions that might reduce displacement or mitigate its impacts, including but not limited to the development or preservation of affordable housing in the vicinity of the stations.</p>	<p>Potential indirect effects on environmental justice populations due to gentrification are addressed in Chapter 4.4 with reference to the relevant literature on the subject. It is not possible to precisely predict these type of impacts, but Chapter 4.4 does identify tools and measures local communities can use to preserve affordable housing options in TOD areas.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.29	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	In places where an existing historic train station will no longer be used for that function, the FEIS/FEIR must recognize that abandonment and neglect of historic structures could result in negative impacts to the community. Particularly in places like downtown Stoughton, where the train station represents an important element contributing to the historic character of the area, mitigation of this impact must include a variety of support actions, including both below market rate transfer of ownership and funding to support repairs and rehabilitation, in order to allow for viable reuse of the structure. The Secretary should require such actions to be specified in the FEIS/FEIR.	The Stoughton Station building is the only existing station facility that would be abandoned. The historic Stoughton Station has been declared surplus by the MBTA and plans to sell the station are underway. The sale will include a protective covenant.
L-093.30	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	In Stoughton, the tracks cross through the downtown near its center and are strongly part of the visual landscape. Fencing and overhead catenaries (for the Stoughton Electric Alternative) should be designed to be visually appealing so as to enhance downtown Stoughton. Current plans for the downtown area directly adjacent to the tracks include a public park and pedestrian-oriented retail and residential areas. The Secretary should require such actions to be specified in the FEIS/FEIR.	<p>General measures for mitigating visual impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.5 and would be further refined during the design process.</p> <p>However, overhead catenaries would not be visually appealing, regardless of the design details. Therefore, the FEIS/FEIR appropriately discloses the visual impacts of the electric alternatives.</p>
L-093.31	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	MAPC looks forward to reviewing a draft monitoring and evaluation plan for the long-term assessment of project impacts and mitigation in the FEIS/FEIR. The monitoring and evaluation plan will assess the accuracy of projected impacts and the effectiveness of mitigation measures, allowing for mid-course corrections if necessary.	Chapter 7 provides the mitigation measures and Draft Chapter 61 finding.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.32	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The Stoughton Alternatives include the construction of a new station, the North Easton Train Station, which would be located on the border of Easton and Stoughton. A new parking lot with 509 spaces is proposed. The proposed parking lot is sited in Stoughton, a community in the MAPC region, while Easton is within the Old Colony Planning Council region.</p> <p>According to the DEIS/DEIR, there are 239 park-and-ride trips and 27 drop off trips forecast during the morning peak hour. Does this necessitate a parking lot with 509 proposed spaces? Has the potential opportunity for using existing parking spaces at Roche Brothers and adjacent office building to the west of Roche Brothers been explored? Has structured parking been considered at this site? A feeder bus connection should also be considered for this station in order to reduce auto trips and parking requirements.</p>	<p>The parking concept for North Easton Station was developed based on projected daily park-and-ride ridership, not just what the station would experience in one peak morning hour. Daily park-and-ride access is projected to be 520 at this station.</p> <p>The project uses existing parking where existing parking peaks do not compete with commuter rail parking demands. One such example is the proposed Kings Highway Station in New Bedford. The businesses in the Roche Brothers Plaza and the office building to the west of Roche Brothers are not compatible for shared use of parking with a commuter rail station. Additionally, the proposed station site offers a closer parking to the station platform than the Roche Brothers parking lot.</p> <p>The proposed North Easton Station area is not currently served by public transit. By extending Route #9 from Brockton past its current terminus at Stonehill College it would be possible to provide bus access to this station. However, the Easton Village Station could be connected to the Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) system by the same route and that connection would be shorter and more direct. For this reason it is not recommended to extend the BAT system to North Easton Station, nor are there other bus systems which could reasonably be extended to serve North Easton Station.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.33	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The Stoughton Alternatives propose modifying the existing Stoughton Train Station to accommodate a second track. Modifications to the tracks and platforms would require changes to the parking layout in the existing lots near the station. Approximately 185 existing parking spaces would be relocated and 350 parking spaces would remain undisturbed.</p> <p>According to the DEIS/DEIR, there are zero park-and-ride trips and 44 drop off trips forecast during the morning peak hour. Does this necessitate retaining 350 parking spaces and relocating 185 parking spaces? The FEIS/FEIR should also consider establishing a feeder bus connection for this station.</p>	<p>Station parking is planned based on projected daily ridership at the station for the year 2035. Parking demand is not met at Stoughton Station today and would far exceed future demand. The relocated Stoughton Station would provide 642 spaces to accommodate both existing demand and future growth.</p> <p>The project scope did not include evaluating feeder bus connections for existing stations; existing stations have established transit connections and improving those connections is not part of the South Coast Rail project.</p>
L-093.34	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	It should be noted that MAPC's comment letter for the ENF stated "although reasonable amounts of parking are essential, is it important that not all of the prime land near stations be lost to parking." Priority should be given to accommodating Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in prime sites near the stations to the maximum extent feasible.	Maintaining areas for TOD was considered in the development of the station plans.
L-093.35	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>The DEIS/DEIR states that the rail alternatives will require midday storage of consists (train sets) in the Boston area to ensure that enough trains would be available for South Coast Rail trains to depart from South Station for the evening peak commute. The Stoughton Alternatives would require layover capacity for four additional consists.</p> <p>-Where are the proposed locations of the storage?</p> <p>-Does the storage require construction of additional facilities?</p> <p>-How does this affect other train routes?</p>	Midday layover facilities that would be used by the project are assumed to be constructed as part of the independent South Station Expansion project (see Section 3.2.16.2). There would be no impact on other train routes.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.36	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>As part of the track expansion project, mid-day layover storage facilities would be constructed to ensure that an adequate supply of trains is available to support evening peak hour commuter transit needs.</p> <p>-Where will the layover storage facilities be located?</p> <p>-Explain how passenger and freight operations will be separated.</p> <p>-What will the impact be on both freight and passengers during construction?</p>	<p>Midday layover facilities that would be used by the project are assumed to be constructed as part of the independent South Station Expansion project (see Section 3.2.16.2). There would be no impact on other train routes.</p>
L-093.37	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>MAPC is pleased that the DEIS/DEIR mentions the need for bicycle and pedestrian access. However, the conceptual station designs need to graphically depict bicycle and pedestrian connections and their access to surrounding retail, commercial and residential uses. As previously requested in MAPC's comment letter on the ENF, incorporating bicycle and pedestrian paths along rail rights of way for the Stoughton Alternatives should be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>	<p>Bicycle and pedestrian access to station sites is depicted graphically in Appendix 4.1-G - Pedestrian Bicycle Distribution Analysis.</p> <p>Providing bicycle and pedestrian paths within the right-of-way would not be safe--the right-of-way would be fenced in developed areas to discourage people from entering the active rail corridor, except at designated at-grade crossings. In addition, adding bicycle and pedestrian paths in undeveloped areas would greatly increase impacts to sensitive natural resources as well as the cost of the project (without addressing the transportation need for improved connectivity between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston).</p>
L-093.38	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	<p>Information about the Stoughton Alternatives' grade crossings is provided in the DEIS/DEIR. However, information about whether they are safe for pedestrians is not clearly conveyed. MAPC would like to see this information depicted on the Grade Crossing Figures 4.1-54 – 4.1-58 for the Stoughton Alternatives. In addition, to what extent were the grade crossings developed with the input of the communities?</p>	<p>Chapter 4.1 contains an incident prediction calculation and commuter rail safety education (Section 4.1.5.1). Table 4.1-57 summarizes incident probability for at-grade crossings along the Stoughton Alternative. The transportation chapter includes figures depicting the at-grade crossings.</p> <p>Public input was obtained from workshops/meetings that were held during the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) phase. Subsequent design work on the grade crossings was completed in accordance with FRA requirements.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-093.39	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	The project should include a proposal to expand bus and shuttle connections between the stations and nearby retail, office, and residential uses for the proposed Stoughton Alternatives. Expanded transit service supporting the operation of the new commuter rail line should be a key element of the mitigation plan. To be successful, bus and shuttle connections need to avoid duplications of service, minimize transfer points, and minimize total travel times. The proponent should also ensure that Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) that provide service in the area are incorporated into these plans.	Three regional transit authorities, Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT), the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) and Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) currently provide local bus service to the SCR corridor. Potential route modifications to existing bus routes to integrate SCR and local bus services were identified to the extent possible, and are described in Chapter 3. MassDOT will coordinate with the bus service providers to improve connectivity with the South Coast Rail service.
L-093.40	Metropolitan Area Planning Council	MAPC applauds the proponent's proposed use of joint ticketing for commuter bus and rail access. SRPEDD and the commuter bus operators have advocated for transportation policymakers to address the transit fare inequity between modes with a joint ticketing system that allows bus operators to offer the same pass as commuter rail with free access to MBTA bus and rapid transit. A joint ticket for commuter bus would enhance bus service within the region and encourage the use of public transportation.	Thank you for your comment.
L-015.01	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	We agree that the Stoughton Route provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford as measured by travel time and ridership. We support the Corps' findings that the operational obstacles associated with both the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternative will make these alternatives infeasible. The fact that the Stoughton route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective.	Thank you for your comment.
L-015.02	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	SRPEDD is also in agreement that the Whittenton Alternative through the City of Taunton poses additional operational problems and should not be considered further. Specifically, the large number of grade crossings in Taunton will be unnecessarily disruptive and will add to the travel time, and thus lowering the ridership numbers.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-015.03	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	SRPEDD further agrees with the analysis of environmental factors including wetlands, air quality, water resources, etc. and supports the conclusion that the Stoughton route performed best on the measure of environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route follows railbeds that were in use a little over fifty years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.	Thank you for your comment.
L-015.04	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	We are very familiar with the corridor as it passes through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC and agree with the conclusion that the wetlands impact will be limited, especially if the trestle is constructed. We would further request significant mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.	Mitigation will occur for impacts in the Hockomock Swamp.
L-015.05	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	It should be pointed out that there are many factors beyond the project purpose that argue in favor of this project and in favor of the Stoughton Alternative. These factors include the smart growth benefits of this investment and the significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled and subsequent greenhouse gas reductions. The region also anxiously anticipates the projected economic benefits that will be associated with the restoration of commuter rail service to Southeastern Massachusetts.	Thank you for your comment.
L-015.06	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	We believe that based upon the information presented in the DEIS that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) should be determined to be the Stoughton Alternative. SRPEDD further supports the electric alternative with its lower carbon footprint and faster travel time between South Coast and Boston.	Thank you for your comment.
L-015.07	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District	SRPEDD urges the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the LEDPA as expeditiously as possible. The region has been working on the restoration of commuter rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for the Corps to complete its review so that MassDOT can proceed with a financial plan and other aspects of this project.	Thank you for your comment.

# **Municipal Government Organizations and Elected Officials**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-087.01	City of Boston Environment Department	The purpose and need for the project is “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning [economic development and environmental preservation] and development strategies in the affected communities.” It is proposed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). This department supports the concept of rail service meeting these ends.	Thank you for your comment.
L-087.02	City of Boston Environment Department	The ENF had indicated that alternatives including a Stoughton option would require construction of a new mid-day layover facility in downtown Boston with infrastructure such as fueling stations, inspection tracks and crew quarters and that rolling stock would be maintained at the MBTA’s Southampton Street facility in Boston or at the Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility in Somerville. The DEIS/DEIR does not include new/additional information about maintenance and fueling and how those needs may affect Boston.	A midday layover facility in Boston is not part of the South Coast Rail Project. The South Coast Rail trains would utilize midday layover facilities anticipated to be constructed as part of the South Station Expansion Project. See Section 3.2.16.2. The South Station Expansion Project has independent utility from the South Coast Rail Project.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-087.03	City of Boston Environment Department	<p>The Stoughton Electric Alternative meets all project purpose measures to the greatest extent followed closely by the Stoughton Diesel Alternative and the Whittenton Electric Alternative. The Bus Rapid Transit would perform most poorly. The Attleboro alternatives are the least practicable. Elements affecting Boston would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• construction of a fourth track along the NEC between Forest Hills Station and Back Bay Station;</li> <li>• construction of a fourth track within existing real estate on the north side of the NEC between Readville Station and Forest Hills;</li> <li>• construction of a fourth track on the south side between Forest Hills and Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue that would require demolition of the existing southern retaining wall and expansion of the cut section;</li> <li>• reconstruction of several orange line stations;</li> <li>• unspecified impacts to residents and business under the Southwest Corridor toward the Back Bay and abutting structures in the South End for utility relocation;</li> <li>• removal and planned replacement of parks and other open/recreational spaces along the corridor including the Southwest Corridor Park which would lose 8.54 acres for tree to six years for construction and lose 2.85 acres permanently; and</li> <li>• a cascading negative impact on the on-time performance of the entire southerly Commuter Rail system.</li> </ul> <p>Construction of the fourth track would take 10 to 12 years.</p> <p>Due to speed, noise impacts would be more severe with electric locomotives than with diesel. Preliminary mitigation measures would not be recommended until the final design process.</p>	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives and the Rapid Bus Alternative have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-087.04	City of Boston Environment Department	We appreciate that construction specifications will stipulate that all diesel construction equipment used on-site will be fitted with after-engine emission controls such as diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) or diesel particulate filters (DPFs) and that construction contractors will be required to utilize ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel for all off-road construction vehicles. We request that the same mitigation measures also be required for on-road vehicles on which catalysts or filters can be accommodated and that the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel be required. It is essential that any plan for the prohibition of excessive idling of construction equipment engines be enforceable and that the same requirements be put into place for on-road vehicles as well. Idling restriction signage may not be sufficient for this task.	The requested change to construction air quality mitigation requirements has been incorporated into Chapter 7.
L-087.05	City of Boston Environment Department	The ENF described vibration analyses for areas in Attleboro, Norton, Lakeview, Freetown, Canton, Stoughton, Bridgewater and Middleborough. We note again that vibration is an existing issue for some Orange Line stations and their immediate environs. They are most prominent around Roxbury Crossing, Ruggles and Massachusetts Avenue; an area of the South End has also been affected by increased sound and vibration over the past two years. No vibration measurements have been taken along Boston alignments to establish existing conditions. We believe that a baseline is necessary.	The South Coast Rail project is anticipated to add 6 new trains per day to the Boston rail corridor. No vibration impacts are anticipated from this minor increase in the number of trains using this heavily traveled corridor.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-087.06	City of Boston Environment Department	We had asked that the DEIR identify the number of net new trips that will be added under each rail alternative and match them to the times of existing services. The DEIS/DEIR indicates that, for purposes of comparing alternatives, headways for commuter rail alternatives were set at 40 minutes on the branches and 20 minutes on the trunk, during the peak period in the peak direction. Scheduled travel times on existing services were not altered in the comparison. The rail alternatives were assumed to provide one train every 40 minutes or three trains per peak period with a fourth train operating on the shoulder near the peak rush hour periods. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from the terminal stations and ninety minutes on the trunk portion. This translates to nine round trip trains per weekday operations from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day. There is no information regarding the schedules of existing service in/through Boston. This is important information for assessing impacts, including vibration. It would also help to determine, in rights-of-way used by multiple rail entities that do not work cooperatively to minimize impacts, how each contributes to conditions that affect the comfort of residents.	The South Coast Rail project is anticipated to add 6 new trains per day to the Boston rail corridor. No noise or vibration impacts are anticipated from this minor increase in the number of trains using this heavily traveled corridor.
L-087.07	City of Boston Environment Department	The DEIS/DEIR indicates that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for vibration will be identified during preliminary and final design. We request that more detail about existing service and conditions and planning begin while environmental review continues.	There is no "LEDPA for vibration", although vibration impacts can be among the environmental impacts considered in LEDPA analysis required by the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. As required under NEPA and MEPA, the EIS/EIR has focused on those areas where noise and vibration impacts are most likely and this does not include Boston.
L-087.08	City of Boston Environment Department	We again ask for a description of the work, associated timelines and potential impacts at and around Readville station when catenary is being installed.	Readville Station is located on the Northeast Corridor, which currently provides electrified service for Amtrak operations. It is anticipated that the Stoughton and Whittenton Electric Alternatives would use this existing infrastructure and would not require major construction in Readville.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-087.09	City of Boston Environment Department	<p>On Earth Day, 2011, Mayor Thomas M. Menino released A Climate of Progress, his updated Climate Action Plan. The Plan encompasses the 2010 consensus report, Sparking the Climate Revolution, and the recommendations of Boston’s Climate Action Leadership Committee and Community Advisory Committee. The Plan includes a set of wide-ranging recommendations aimed at significantly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and preparing for the risks of climate change in Boston and is the guiding document for climate change adaptation. It calls for reducing Boston’s GHG emissions by 25% by 2020 and incorporating the potential effects of climate change in all planning and review of public and private projects. Both Sparking the Climate Revolution and A Climate of Progress can be accessed at <a href="http://cityofboston.gov">cityofboston.gov</a> by opening the Environmental &amp; Energy Services site and clicking on “Climate Action.”</p> <p>The five overarching recommendations of the Leadership Committee are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce Boston’s GHG emissions 25% by 2020;</li> <li>• immediately start incorporating projected effects of climate change — particularly sea level rise, heat waves, and more intense storms — in all planning and review for municipal and private projects;</li> <li>• develop a comprehensive public engagement effort, including a public commission and strong partnerships with community organizations;</li> <li>• use climate action opportunities to advance Boston’s green economy and jobs goals; and</li> <li>• ensure that climate action has clear public and private leadership and sufficient public and private resources.</li> </ul> <p>This department appreciates the inclusion of GHG information in the DEIS/DEIR and would favor electric, rather than diesel, service. We believe that the potential for renewable energy generation and energy conservation be explored along the chosen alignment. An anticipated increase in the number of days over 90 or 100 degrees and the number of consecutive high-heat days will lead to</p>	<p>The proposed station stops do not include buildings. Energy efficient-lighting systems would be considered in the design process.</p> <p>Incorporating renewable energy generation into the project was not evaluated and is outside of the scope of alternatives under review in this EIS/EIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		increased stress on the electrical grid. The use of diesel-powered life-safety/emergency systems that may add to ozone pollution levels and increase the heat island effect should be minimized as feasible. Generating facilities that are capable of providing power off of the grid can help to eliminate some more polluting systems. LED lighting and other sustainable technologies and practices should be included in a plan of construction and operating standards for new service.	
L-087.10	City of Boston Environment Department	We also recommend that the multiple issues associated with climate change be considered in additional project planning. Sea level rise and an increase in the number and intensity of storms resulting in the need for intensified stormwater management are only two of the challenges over the life of a transportation system.	Chapter 4.18 addresses planning for sea level rise.
L-087.11	City of Boston Environment Department	Base upon the information in the DEIS/DEIR, it appears that the Stoughton Electric alternative would provide the greatest overall benefit. We hope to receive more information that would add to our understanding of the complex issues undertaken in this analysis. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment.	Thank you for your comment.
L-034.01	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	The Fall River Conservation Commission is writing to request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.
L-034.02	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	We would further request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office establish a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) that identifies one route – the Stoughton alternative - for further study.	Both the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives were advanced for further evaluation in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-034.03	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	We believe that of the options under consideration, the Stoughton route offers the best balance of transportation and economic development opportunities while minimizing environmental impacts.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-034.04	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	The Stoughton alternatives have less impact on wetlands than the Rapid Bus and Attleboro options. Of the impacts, 1.8 of the acres are in the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern and are primarily the loss of wetlands that have formed on the former railbed. The project includes relocating a stream currently on the railbed back to its natural channel, which will create ecological benefits. The Commonwealth has committed to constructing an elevated trestle through the swamp, which will facilitate the movement of animals across the rail alignment	Thank you for your comment.
L-034.05	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	While there are potential impacts to threatened and endangered species, the Corps lists measures to be developed in coordination with regulatory agencies to avoid, minimize and mitigate rare species impacts within the project Study Area. Mitigation for biodiversity impacts can also be included for further development in the FEIS/FEIR.	Mitigation measures have been further developed for the FEIS/FEIR.
L-034.06	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	The Stoughton route appears to meet the project purpose with the least amount of environmental damage. Trip time is a critical consideration in determining the best alternative, and rail trip time is significantly shorter than Rapid Bus, and Stoughton straight is the fastest option. The shorter travel time will attract more riders and take more vehicles off the roads, improving regional mobility and VMT reduction. Also, the Stoughton route provides greater air quality and climate-related environmental benefits.	Air quality and VMT reduction benefits are discussed in Chapter 4.9.
L-034.07	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	The project design includes smart growth measures that would encourage the creation of compact development zones and aid in the protection of undeveloped land, which could help to preserve the character of the South Coast.	Smart growth planning measures, including implementation monitoring, are discussed in Chapter 5. The analysis of indirect and cumulative impacts quantifies the potential benefit of such measures, as shown by the comparison of "Scenario 1" and "Scenario 2" in Chapter 5.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-034.08	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	Mitigation is outlined for environmental resources, visual and noise impacts and vibration in the documents. The FEIS/FEIR should present further details for the Stoughton alternative. We encourage the agencies to work together with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to develop a resource mitigation approach that addresses the Commonwealth and United States' specific needs but also takes a look at broader possibilities for the region that will serve to enhance important ecological functions.	Mitigation measures for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives have been further refined and are summarized in Chapter 7.
L-034.09	City of Fall River Conservation Commission	We would ask you to please consider that according to the criteria established by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Fall River is defined as an Environmental Justice Community. We believe that Fall River's Environmental Justice population could benefit from increased access to jobs, education and other opportunities offered by the rail project.	Benefits (and impacts) to environmental justice communities are addressed in Chapter 4.4.
L-035.01	City of Fall River Planning Department	I am writing to support MassDOT's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative of LEDPA. We are also asking that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work with the State of Massachusetts and support - the Stoughton alternative - for further study.	Thank you for your comment.
L-035.02	City of Fall River Planning Department	The Stoughton route offers the best balance of transportation, economic development and environmental impact of the options under consideration.	Thank you for your comment.
L-035.03	City of Fall River Planning Department	We would ask you to please consider that according to the criteria established by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Fall River has the highest unemployment rate in the state and would benefit from increased access to jobs, education and other opportunities offered by the rail project.	Economic benefits were among the issues studied in the EIS/EIR process.
L-035.04	City of Fall River Planning Department	In closing, we would ask you to endorse the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-026.01	City of New Bedford City Council	I am writing pursuant to that Motion to provide comments on the South Coast Rail (SCR) Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report on behalf of the City Council. The City Council strongly supports the building of the South Coast Rail Project, which is so important to the residents of the Greater New Bedford Region. The City Council also strongly supports the Stoughton alternative with a 70 minute commute.	Thank you for your comment. The Stoughton Electric Alternative commute time to Boston would be 77 minutes in the peak period.
L-026.02	City of New Bedford City Council	The SCR project is not just about access to the Boston area, although this is vitally important to the economic recovery of the City of New Bedford, it is about connectivity and opening up a Region of the Commonwealth that is/and has been under-connected, underserved, and often simply an afterthought of this Boston-centric State for far too long.	Thank you for your comment.
L-026.03	City of New Bedford City Council	The SCR project offers economic opportunity to Environmental Justice communities and others, including access to educational opportunities, workforce training, and service learning, which is currently prohibited by lack of public transit to the South Coast Region.	Environmental justice is addressed in Chapter 4.4.
L-026.04	City of New Bedford City Council	In addition, we are urging that the Army Corps of Engineers do not extend the comment period, as the core of the information has been available online since the Fall of 2009, and further delays will preclude us from applying for Federal funding opportunities because of the need of a permitted project.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-026.05	City of New Bedford City Council	<p>Furthermore, the SCR project is an issue of equity. New Bedford and Fall River are the only Cities of their size and population that do not have Commuter Rail access, yet we continue to pay taxes, thus supporting public transit for all other regions of the Commonwealth.</p> <p>In closing, I would reiterate that the SCR project is an EQUITY issue, not just a transportation issue or just an economic issue. The people of New Bedford, and the South Coast Region, deserve and demand equal access that other Regions of the State, including our opponents to the north of us, have been enjoying for decades the positive impacts that Commuter Rail has brought to their Communities. We ask for nothing more or less than that which other Communities currently enjoy and benefit from. I urge that you consider this as you make your decision.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-013.01	City of New Bedford Planning Board	I am writing this letter, in my capacity as Chairman of the New Bedford Planning Board, to express my strong support for the recently completed South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIR), prepared by the Corps. This report is a most thorough evaluation of a proposed transportation initiative that will benefit New Bedford and the entire south coast.	Thank you for your comment.
L-013.02	City of New Bedford Planning Board	Fifty years ago the intent of public rail service was simply to connect New Bedford to Boston, the recent proposed transportation initiative seeks to establish new opportunities along the entire fifty mile corridor. The proposed commuter rail service is being intentionally planned to maximize economic benefit to all thirty-one communities along its route. This initiative overcomes long-standing environmental justice issues by re-establishing transportation equity to the south coast as other gateway communities have benefitted, statewide.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-013.03	City of New Bedford Planning Board	The DEIR examines in great detail how the most practicable environmental alternative, the proposed Stoughton Alternative, is the least damaging solution in creating job access, lessening urban and suburban sprawl and anticipating the consequences of impending climate change on a regional level. With the uncontrollable rise in fuel prices, there is no better time in American history than the present to move this transportation project forward. The corridor planning study underwent a robust civic engagement process, meeting in over one-hundred different settings while examine dozens of alternative routes, economic variables and scenarios. It appears that the Stoughton alternative has risen as the preferred, most practicable alternative, affording convenient, reliable Boston access within seventy (70) minutes.	Thank you for your comment.
L-013.04	City of New Bedford Planning Board	New Bedford has recently completed a Comprehensive Master Plan - New Bedford 2020, adopted by this Planning Board on November 22, 2010. Consistent with this Master Plan, abundant reference to the re-establishment of commuter rail is acknowledged in the transportation and economic sections. This particular rail project will complete the City's intermodal port to rail capacity The City has also begun a long awaited re-zoning process to become consistent with this proposed rail corridor plan.	The consistency of the South Coast Rail project with New Bedford 2020 is acknowledged.
L-013.05	City of New Bedford Planning Board	On the behalf of the New Bedford Planning Board, I therefore, respectfully, urge you and the Army Corps to support this Stoughton alternative, as you continue onward towards the initiation and completion of a final EIR.	Thank you for your comment.
L-011.01	City of New Bedford Planning Department	I am writing this letter to express my strong support for the recently completed South Coast Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIR). This report is one of the most thorough evaluations of a proposed transportation initiative that I have ever reviewed in my thirty-six year career as a public service employee.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-011.02	City of New Bedford Planning Department	While over fifty years ago the intent of public rail service was simply to connect New Bedford to Boston, the recent proposed transportation initiative seeks to accomplish myriad new opportunities. The proposed commuter rail service is being intentionally planned to maximize economic benefit to all thirty-one communities along this fifty mile corridor. This initiative overcomes long-standing environmental justice issues by re-establishing transportation equity between the south coast and other gateway communities, statewide.	Thank you for your comment.
L-011.03	City of New Bedford Planning Department	The DEIR examines in formidable detail how the most practicable environmental alternative, the proposed Stoughton Alternative, is the least damaging solution in creating job access, lessening urban and suburban sprawl and anticipating the consequences of impending climate change on a regional level. With the instability of oil derived transportation fuel, there is no better time in American history than the present to push ahead this transportation project.	Thank you for your comment.
L-011.04	City of New Bedford Planning Department	The corridor planning study underwent a rigorous civic engagement process, meeting in over one-hundred different settings to examine dozens of alternative routes and scenarios. It appears that consensus has it that the Stoughton alternative has risen as the preferred, most practicable alternative, affording Boston access within seventy (70) minutes. New Bedford has begun a long awaited re-zoning process to become consistent with this proposed rail corridor plan.	Thank you for your comment.
L-011.05	City of New Bedford Planning Department	I therefore, respectfully, urge you and the Army Corps to support this Stoughton alternative, as you continue onward towards the initiation and completion of a final EIR.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-016.01	City of Taunton	<p>As Mayor of the City of Taunton, I, along with the unanimous support of the several editions of the Taunton Municipal Council have enthusiastically supported the direct Stoughton Route that will provide rail service to our community and to the South Coast region in a more timely and cost effective manner. The direct Stoughton Route will travel south from Boston through the communities of Stoughton, Easton and Raynham over the same railroad bed that had been used by passenger trains over 150 years ago. Once entering Taunton, the trains will stop at a station planned along Dean Street (Route 44) where my administration has designated and endorsed a Transit Oriented District (T.O.D.). The trains would continue southward through Taunton to another station planned behind Depot Drive near the intersection of Route 140 and Route 24. The route would have only five (5) at-grade crossings through its entire length through Taunton. The direct Stoughton Route provides for the quickest route between the South Coast communities and Boston and it would provide, according to the studies, the highest ridership.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
L-016.02	City of Taunton	<p>The citizens of Taunton through their elected representatives have gone on record as in favor of the direct Stoughton Route, and they have also gone on record as emphatically opposed to the Attleboro Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route, as those options would provide from fourteen to fifteen (15) at-grade crossings within our community, and effectively cut off public safety operations within our community. The Attleboro Route and the Whittenton Alternative Route would also cause the trips between Boston and the South Coast communities to be longer and less cost effective. The Attleboro Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route would cause the trains to run through our heavily congested residential area where the houses are right up against the tracks. The noise mitigation measures that would be necessary would also add to the costs of this route.</p>	<p>The impacts of at-grade crossings were evaluated in Chapter 4.1 and greater impact of the Whittenton Alternatives on at-grade crossings Taunton relative to the Stoughton Alternatives acknowledged in the alternatives analysis.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-016.03	City of Taunton	Attleboro officials have long contested that route for environmental reason. My administration with the unanimous support of the Taunton Municipal Council in Taunton has worked closely with the Selectman of Dighton and Norton to endorse the application Three Mile River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (A.C.E.C.), which was recently adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Attleboro Route runs directly through this A.C.E.C.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
E-006.01	Easton Conservation Commission	On behalf of the Easton Conservation Commission, we respectfully request more time to review the South Coast Rail DEIS and submit comments. As you know the DEIS is over 2,500 pages with a great deal of technical information to review and analyze. It is not possible to complete a thorough review in only 60 days. Therefore, we ask that you grant an additional 60 days for the comment period.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-014.01	Easton Historical Commission	The Easton Historical Commission vehemently opposes the proposed commuter rail service through our town for many reasons, including its negative impact on numerous historic districts and sites.	Impacts to historic sites and districts are described in Chapter 4.8, along with a summary of the process by which mitigation measures would be incorporated in a Programmatic Agreement.
L-014.02	Easton Historical Commission	The proposed route will bisect the North Easton Village National Register District, the Richardson National Landmark District, and the Ames Local Historic District. Its proximity to these districts, as well as their associated buildings, will cause irreparable harm to them. The project is ill-conceived on many levels. History cannot be mitigated.	Impacts to historic sites and districts are described in Chapter 4.8, along with a summary of the process by which mitigation measures would be incorporated in a Programmatic Agreement.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-014.03	Easton Historical Commission	The promised increase in revenue to local towns will not happen. How many people south of Raynham commute to Boston daily? The Taunton bus that transported folks from Fall River to Boston was cancelled due to lack of ridership. Do people from Fall River or New Bedford want to commute 1 ½ hours each way, every day, to go to work? A 2009 report based on federal census data showed that only 1.4% of the Fall River workforce took public transportation to work. Are the people who make up their above-average unemployment rate qualified for and able to afford the trip into Boston for jobs which don't even exist?	<p>The purpose and need statement is provided in Chapter 2.</p> <p>Existing commuting patterns are not a prediction of future patterns with the provision of new mode options (this is the function of the future ridership projections).</p> <p>Table 4.3-6 provides a place of employment comparison between towns in the social and economic environment study area and those along the Fitchburg Line, which is comparable in terms of distance from Boston. The table shows that in 2000, approximately four percent of all work trips originating from within the South Coast Rail study area were to the Boston/Cambridge area, while along the Fitchburg Line corridor 8.5 percent of work trips were to Boston or Cambridge.</p>
L-014.04	Easton Historical Commission	Using Brockton as an example: With three commuter stations, where are the promised mixed-use developments that the state predicted would magically appear around them? Associated data there shows that their residents' use of public transportation has not increased since the stations were built in 1997. The city's crime rate has increased. Could there be a connection?	<p>With respect to Transit Oriented Development, it is recognized that transit access is only one of many factors that influence land development decisions (other factors including economic conditions, local land use regulations, infrastructure, environmental constraints etc.). Development of any particular area cannot be guaranteed or predicted with certainty. Nevertheless, the improved accessibility provided by the project is expected to encourage a greater proportion of future growth to occur in the vicinity of station areas on a regional basis and MassDOT will implement a monitoring and reporting program that will include transit oriented development metrics (see Chapter 5).</p> <p>Development in specific areas/parcels near stations is not guaranteed, but the overall effect of rail transit on land use surrounding stations has been well studied (see Section 4.3.3.1 for summary of literature related to impacts on property values, which is a proxy measure for development potential).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-014.05	Easton Historical Commission	There are also a myriad of safety issues regarding grade crossings, a severe lack of safe and adequate parking, and permanent damage to the Hockomock Swamp to consider as well.	The issues raised by the comment were all considered in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-014.06	Easton Historical Commission	The whole idea is a bad one. Not enough people will use this rail line, it will cost billions that we don't have (funneling money from other pressing needs for repairs to roads and bridges and funding our schools), and it will create more unfunded maintenance costs. Additionally, the damage to local, state, and national historic sites will be devastating. Once our history is gone, it's gone.	Capital cost and maintenance costs were considered (see Chapter 3). The environmental issues raised by the comment were all considered in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-014.07	Easton Historical Commission	We urge you to reconsider this proposal and spare Easton and our neighbors from the costs and devastation to our history, environment, and communities.	The environmental issues raised by the comment were all considered in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-057.01	City of Fall River City Councilor, Raymond Mitchell	<p>I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the proposed South Coast Rail Project. This project will bring many opportunities to the residents of Fall River. Not only by allowing convenient, low cost travel options to Boston without driving, but it will also allow more employment opportunities for our residents.</p> <p>I believe that the proposed South Coast Rail Project is greatly needed by our citizens. It will allow our community easy access to jobs and services available in the Boston area. In closing, I would just like to offer my support of this great opportunity for our City.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-049.01	Norton Conservation Commission	The Norton Conservation Commission has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the South Coast Rail Project, EEA no. 14346 and NAE-2007-00698. We strongly agree with the MassDOT's assessment that the Attleboro Alternative is the least practicable of the Alternatives and should be eliminated from further consideration.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.02	Norton Conservation Commission	In the Mitigation Section, under Vibration Dampening, existing railbed materials replaced for vibration transmission should be properly and completely removed from the sites. In the past, rail ties have been left and dumped in wetland areas adjacent to the rail line. The project must ensure that rail ties will not be dumped into Wetland Resource Areas. Section 4.12.4.3 should be expanded to clearly state the method of removal rather than stating the generic "disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations" phrase.	MassDOT will pre-characterize any materials, including railbed materials, that would be managed during the project to determine the course of action for excavation and disposal in accordance with the appropriate MassDEP regulations at 310 CMR 40.0030, Management Procedures for Remediation Waste, as well as MassDEP Policy #COMM-97-001, Reuse & Disposal of Contaminated Soil at Massachusetts Landfills, and appropriate federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations.
L-049.03	Norton Conservation Commission	Under Visual Screening, internal landscaped areas should include native vegetation where feasible and not include any species listed by the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE).	Landscape plans for each station will be developed during preliminary and final design. MassDOT will include native vegetation where feasible and avoid any species listed in the IPANE.
L-049.04	Norton Conservation Commission	Additional potential vernal pools identified by NHESP and SCR proponents should be completed as described on page 4.14-28 in the Attleboro Secondary. Two field-verified vernal pools are mentioned in the text but not illustrated as vernal pools in the Figures. Vernal pools ATA-03 and ATA-13 should be illustrated as vernal pools in all Figures. SCR should confirm that impacts to the buffer to these two vernal pools have been evaluated.	The Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration, see Chapter 3. Chapter 4.14 describes additional evaluations of vernal pools along the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternative routes.
L-049.05	Norton Conservation Commission	On page 4.14-57, SCR acknowledges tracks and rail road ties prevent amphibian, reptile and small mammal migration, except through culverts but, some of the culverts in the Attleboro Secondary are too small to allow amphibian, reptile and small mammal crossing, and may act as a barrier, particularly along the section with Wading River on both sides of the tracks in Norton. This area should be evaluated for wildlife crossings.	The Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration, see Chapter 3.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.06	Norton Conservation Commission	Wildlife crossings, under-rail troughs and underpass locations should also be reviewed with the local Conservation Commission to ensure that they are appropriately placed. SCR should utilize skilled trackers to evaluate track, scat and sign for the most biologically appropriate and cost effective location for the crossing. The drift fences to funnel animals into the tunnels would have to be regularly maintained if made out of drift fence material. SCR should consider constructing them with a more permanent material like that proposed for the wingwall guides if appropriate and approved by NHESP. The requirement for such wildlife corridor crossings should be for common wildlife as well, not just state-listed species. Spotted turtle should receive special attention in the Attleboro Alternatives so that the species doesn't become threatened due to the increase in trains. The new Attleboro Bypass is proposed through undeveloped land and should include wildlife crossing features and nesting sites. There is a gravel pit area west of Chartley Pond in Norton (in Figure 4.15-4a Title 2) that may be suitable for turtle nesting restoration sites. The DEIS/DEIR acknowledges that the Gilbert Street Rear in Mansfield (wetland MMA-22) and Medeiros land in Norton will become segmented for wildlife and must provide a wildlife crossing area to prevent species isolation.	<p>Final design of under-rail troughs and underpass locations will utilize appropriate resources to optimize the design for wildlife passage, taking into consideration applicable technical and regulatory requirements. Input from the local Conservation Commissions and NESHP is welcomed in the design process.</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration</p>
L-049.07	Norton Conservation Commission	Vegetation Management Plans and Yearly Operating Plans should be updated for the powerline easement and the railroad, and submitted to the local Conservation Commission for review to ensure items such as post-construction maintenance of drainage swales is included.	The comment is not applicable because the Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.08	Norton Conservation Commission	The third track for the Northeast Corridor would require earthwork for the expanded railbed, three-track catenary supports with wires along the length of the line, reconstructing three existing train stations and reconstructing 22 bridges, which will have direct impacts to four historic bridges and indirect noise and contemplative impacts to four historic resources. Archaeological reconnaissance surveys have not been completed in these locations despite the documented potential for unrecorded sites in sensitive areas. Please require these surveys be done. Copies of archaeological surveys should be submitted to the local conservation commissions, historic commissions and boards of selectmen or city council.	The comment is not applicable because the Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.09	Norton Conservation Commission	The Attleboro Secondary will pass through 4.3 miles in Norton containing five resources recommended for eligibility on the National Register listing including the Wading River area, Chartley Area, Taunton Copper Works, William M. Sturdy House No.1 and William M. Sturdy House No.2. The Barrowsville station is within two of these resources. The Attleboro Secondary will have direct impacts to 8 historic properties and indirect and potential adverse impacts to 70 historic properties including grade crossings at Union Rd, South Worcester St, and John Scott Blvd; the Wading River Area and the Chartley Area; and the William M. Sturdy House in Norton, that should require sound insulation and mitigation barriers utilizing methods described in the Mitigation Section (4.8.5.3). The Attleboro Bypass route is assessed for moderate to high archaeological sensitivity for pre-contact/contact Native American habitation and resource procurement/processing sites and post-contact Euro-American agrarian-related cultural deposits, including the Barrowsville station location. Severe noise impacts to historic properties are expected and should require soundproofing and noise mitigation. An intensive whole site excavation-type archaeological survey should be required for portions of this route as it passes through the Three-Mile River ACEC due to expected Native American resources.	The comment is not applicable because the Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.10	Norton Conservation Commission	Figures 4.15-3b through 4.15-4a appear to be incorrect with respect to the southernmost portion of the maps and contain a portion of Dedham/Westwood/Norwood section of Figure 4.15-3a. This should be corrected to view the actual maps as intended.	The comment is not applicable because the Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.11	Norton Conservation Commission	Please clarify whether or not the Attleboro Secondary will be reconstructed along full length of track or just in certain portions.	The Whittenton Alternatives include 2.2 miles of single-track reconstruction on the Attleboro Secondary in Taunton. Norton is not affected.
L-049.12	Norton Conservation Commission	Mitigation for the Attleboro Alternatives is required for 20.56 acres of wetland alteration. SCR proposes a watershed approach using the Watershed Plans rather than compensate within the same general area of the waterbody or reach to be altered. This approach may be reasonable, provided filling of wetlands does not create a local flooding problem. Should proposed wetland alteration contribute to local impacts of flooding, please require floodplain compensation or wetland restoration in those local areas rather than through a wetland banking program. Impacts to homes and businesses should be reduced as much as possible. Local officials should provide input regarding which locations may result in flooding impacts on surrounding homes and businesses. SCR should work closely with local Conservation Commissions to ensure that flooding of abutting properties does not increase as a result of this project. Similarly, vernal pool alteration is proposed and it is assumed that replication would be done on a watershed scale rather than replicated near the location. SCR could provide upland protection through fee simple acquisition or conservation restriction, of existing vernal pools along the route that will not be altered as part of the compensation.	No wetland banking is proposed. The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.13	Norton Conservation Commission	On page 4.16-119 under "Bank", SCR states that wildlife habitat evaluations will be completed to guide mitigation decisions. Please require wildlife habitat evaluations for the portions of the track that will fragment locally important wildlife habitats, such as BioMap Cores and Supporting Landscapes, areas of locally known wildlife migration routes and the entire length of the new tracks for the Attleboro Bypass. Rather than solely using Appendix B of the Massachusetts Wildlife Habitat Protection Guidance for Inland Wetlands (DEP, March 2006) in those evaluations, require the inclusion of skilled trackers (such as those with a Cybertracking Certification) to evaluate the track, scat and sign of local wildlife along the train routes. Inclusion of this important information will facilitate identifying the most appropriate locations for the placement and sizing of wildlife crossing structures. Please require that adequate funding be available for the maintenance of such structures should they require on-going maintenance and require the review of Operation and Maintenance Plans for the train route to ensure maintenance of these structures is included.	Information on wildlife crossings is provided in Chapter 4.14.
L-049.14	Norton Conservation Commission	<p>Please require that any culvert repair, replacement or new construction associated with the train routes take into consideration the most accurate rainfall data for sizing purposes. Rainfall amounts should be taken from the Atlas of Precipitation Extremes for the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada* known as the "Cornell data". Use of the Cornell Data for rainfall amounts will ensure that the culverts/bridges etc. are properly sized for the rain events we currently receive and will ensure a long-term success of operation with projected climate change models for increases in rate, intensity and duration of storm events. Please also require the use of the Cornell Data in sizing storm water basins at the station locations.</p> <p>*Atlas of Precipitation Extremes for the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada. Daniel S. Wilks and Richard P. Cember. Cornell University, Publication No. RR 93-5. September 1993 and the beta website.</p>	Information on culvert design and sizing is provided in Chapter 4.14 and Appendix 4.14-A.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.15	Norton Conservation Commission	When each culvert is evaluated for replacement, SCR should re-evaluate the need for wildlife crossings. Page 4.16-96 says "where possible, culverts would be replaced to meet stream crossing standards". How will that be determined and by whom? It should be evaluated and coordinated with the local conservation commissions as well as the ACOE and NHESP.	Chapter 4.14 describes the bridge and culvert evaluation process. Any bridge or culvert construction project that would impact wetlands or waterways would be subject to regulatory approval by the appropriate federal, state, or local agency.
L-049.16	Norton Conservation Commission	All storm water discharges for the Attleboro Secondary are in Norton and all receiving waters are on impaired water list. While this is already an active rail line, there currently isn't any storm water management. SCR should provide treatment to extent practicable and at a minimum improve existing conditions on all portions of the existing track where work is to be done.	Track drainage features are described in Chapter 4.17. As directed by MassDEP, the proposed features were based on the Greenbush Line drainage features.
L-049.17	Norton Conservation Commission	Maintenance of tracks, country-style drainage swales, filter fabric at ballasts to capture grease-inspection must be incorporated into an Operation and Maintenance Plan that addresses the regular maintenance, repair, replacement, and disposal.	Water resource mitigation commitments are provided in Chapter 4.17.
L-049.18	Norton Conservation Commission	Is there an opportunity to use solar power at the traction power stations?	MassDOT will explore all feasible options to incorporate alternative energy sources into the project. However the implementation of such options depends on cost, availability and reliability of such options at the time of final design.
L-049.19	Norton Conservation Commission	Norton has three ACECs; the Hockomock Swamp ACEC; the Canoe River ACEC and the Three-Mile ACEC. Storm water management projects in Norton within an ACEC have typically infiltrated as much post-development storm water as the soil can hold regardless of the minimum requirements of DEP. Project proponents have also provided a minimum of 93% TSS removal rates within their proposed storm water systems. Proposed work in Norton within an ACEC should comply with these local standards.	No work is proposed in Norton (the Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.20	Norton Conservation Commission	Public and private protected land sections of the DEIS/DEIR still do not appear to identify the lands with Conservation Restrictions that may be impacted by the rail alternatives. There are conservation restricted lands directly adjacent to the Attleboro Secondary in Norton. Protected open space layers are still inaccurate on plans (figures 4.14). Please update those Figures identifying the location of CRs and update Open Space data layers. Please include a description of any other action that needs to be taken if there is an additional conversion of protected land as a result of the map inaccuracy.	No work is proposed in Norton (the Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration).
L-049.21	Norton Conservation Commission	The Attleboro Alternatives would convert 8.93 acres of permanently protected land to another use with an Article 97 conversion. The DEIS/DEIR incorrectly states on page 4.10-40 that access to protected land would not be significantly impacted. The Conservation Commission and Land Preservation Society of Norton (LPS) should be allowed the opportunity to determine if the impacts to their properties will be significant. For instance, most residents access Chartley Pond at the railroad crossing on Union Ave and proposed alterations to the at-grade crossing are likely to alter that access, and is likely to be significant. Similarly, access to the LPS land is typically along the powerline on Richardson Ave.	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.22	Norton Conservation Commission	Page 4.10-31 states that Barrowsville Pond Conservation Area and Lion's Park Ball Field would not be "substantively impacted by development of the Barrowsville Station" but does not identify the potential or the direct/indirect impacts. These must be identified. The Conservation Commission should have the opportunity decide if the proposed impacts will be "substantive" to their own property, based on local concerns at the local level.	The Attleboro Alternative, with which the Barrowsville Station is associated, is no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.23	Norton Conservation Commission	The proposed public land alterations to 3.34 acres in Mansfield on Gilbert Street Rear would include potentially significant barriers to wildlife migration and impacts to vernal pool species. The Article 97 conversion should include a sizeable replacement area within the same wetland/upland area. Also, the 0.65 acres of Land Preservation Society Land at the Medeiros Preserve should also be replaced in the immediate vicinity and provide a connection to other protected land as an alternate wildlife migration route to prevent fragmentation and species isolation in this northwestern portion of Norton.	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.24	Norton Conservation Commission	Mitigation measures for the Attleboro Alternatives (page 4.10-56) do not identify the 0.02 acres of public land on the Three-Mile River in Norton that will be converted as listed on page 4.10-63 or 0.65 acres of LPS land for mitigation and should be added for mitigation. These parcels should be identified and listed for mitigation.	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.25	Norton Conservation Commission	An inaccurate timeline for Shpack Superfund site clean-up is described on Page 4.12-8. The clean-up of the radiological materials is scheduled through 2011 not 2010. 'Also, this portion of the clean-up only encompasses the work done by the ACOE. The EPA and PRPs still need to finalize the chemical and materials clean-up. This work has not yet begun and will extend well past the 2010 clean-up date projected in the DEIS/DEIR. The conclusion of a "low potential impact" should be re-evaluated and discussed in further detail on page 4.12-43. The Shpack site fits more closely with the 'high potential impact" due to the changing site use and conditions, future clean-up and wetland restoration activities, construction activities and remediation activities. The site will also have ongoing monitoring and assessment.	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.26	Norton Conservation Commission	The route taken for the materials removal from Shpack is via Union Road over the railroad tracks, at the at-grade railroad crossing. This portion of Union Road is lower than the surrounding wetlands and has been documented as a high turtle mortality area of Norton due to road kill. Should SCR need a restoration project for the Attleboro Bypass, wildlife crossings to allow reptile and amphibian migration between the wetlands should be considered a reasonable and viable option.	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.27	Norton Conservation Commission	Screening methods of soils excavated for the Attleboro Bypass near Shpack should be more specific and include methods for radiological contamination screening (Page 4.12-55).	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.28	Norton Conservation Commission	Attleboro Alternatives include impacts to habitat for nine state-listed species. Box turtle habitat altered at the Barrowsville Station site should be replicated. The discussion of alteration of rare species habitat for the Three-Mile River should be expanded. SCR proponents must ensure that there is adequate funding for the daily monitoring proposed in section 4.15.3.4 and provide measures to ensure that the erosion and sediment controls established during construction are actually removed at the end of the project and will not create a new barrier to wildlife movement. SCR should confirm with NHESP that there are no new Priority Habitat areas along the approved route prior to construction and provide the necessary documentation and avoidance and mitigation measures; two new Wood Turtle records have been accepted by NHESP in the Three-Mile River near the bridge replacement area this year.	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.
L-049.29	Norton Conservation Commission	The description of Three-Mile River on page 4.17-17 is incorrect. The Three-Mile River starts in Norton and then runs through Taunton. The surface water category should be updated to clarify this too.	The Three-Mile River is no longer discussed in Chapter 4.17 because the Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.30	Norton Conservation Commission	Chapter 91 absolutely takes jurisdiction over waters navigable waterway by canoe or kayak and applies to the Three-Mile River. This section near the bridge is navigable by canoe and kayak. The Open Space Committee has sponsored trips along this reach of the river in the past.	The Three-Mile River is no longer discussed in Chapter 4.17 because the Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration.
L-049.31	Norton Conservation Commission	The proposed construction at the Barrowsville station site would alter bordering vegetated wetland and a stream for access to the site. There is an Order of Resource Area Delineation for the wetland boundary and an Order of Conditions (OOC) for a residential development on the property. The bvw and stream have been altered and the OOC requires restoration of the altered resource areas. SCR should coordinate with the local Conservation Commission to ensure that the plans contain a restoration designs for altered wetlands and stream as part of the approval process before the Commission for the construction of the Barrowsville Station.	The Attleboro Alternative, with which the Barrowsville Station is associated, is no longer under consideration.
L-049.32	Norton Conservation Commission	There are two certified vernal pools on the second parcel of the permitted project at the proposed Barrowsville Station location (SCR proposes to use only one of the parcels). Impacts to the buffer zone and critical terrestrial habitat are likely to impair obligate, facultative and common vernal pool species' migration, cover, foraging, nesting and overwintering habitat. SCR may consider permanently preserving the second parcel as a local restoration project for the Attleboro Secondary.	The Attleboro Alternative, with which the Barrowsville Station is associated, is no longer under consideration.
L-049.33	Norton Conservation Commission	The Barrowsville Station location is assessed for moderate to high archaeological resources and should have an intensive archaeological survey conducted prior to local permitting. Copies of the survey should be submitted to the Conservation Commission and Norton Historical Society.	The Attleboro Alternative, with which the Barrowsville Station is associated, is no longer under consideration.
L-049.34	Norton Conservation Commission	Barrowsville station has 3.53 new acres of impervious cover and 339 parking spaces. It should be considered a LUHPPL. Please require that only non-sodium based de-icers are used at the station.	The Attleboro Alternative, with which the Barrowsville Station is associated, is no longer under consideration.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.35	Norton Conservation Commission	Responses to the comments for the ENF are not readily found in the DEIS/DEIR as described in Volume I: DEIS/DEIR Text. Appendix 8.2-A was not included in the copy I received.	Our apologies for the missing appendix. The entire DEIS/DEIR has been available online, including Appendix 8.2-A.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-049.36	Norton Conservation Commission	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives do not further the stated purposes of the project due to the increase in construction costs, travel time to get into Boston and the greater amount of wetland alteration and environmental impacts than the other route options. For the following reasons, we believe that the Attleboro Alternative is not the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) and should be removed from further consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction impacts of the Attleboro Alternative include disruption of business, loss of revenue and economic opportunity, noise, dust, and disruption of traffic flows. The Attleboro Alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o have the highest lost property tax revenue of \$81,332.57 per year in 2009 dollars and will have a significant impact on municipalities already experiencing losses in local aid;</li> <li>o will displace six residences and six local businesses;</li> <li>o have the highest capital cost and highest cost per rider;</li> </ul> </li> <li>and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o will take the longest amount of time for construction, nearly twice as long.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• An indirect impact of the train is loss of wetland for new residential growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the Attleboro Alternative expects an additional loss of 13.41 acres of wetland for residential construction</li> <li>o the acres of decreased value show the Attleboro Alternative has a higher biodiversity impact than the other routes, in 138,496 acres of land</li> <li>o the increased water demand of 12,828,725 gallons per household is also higher than the other routes</li> <li>o there will be more greenhouse gas emissions with the Attleboro Alternative than the other alternatives. Attleboro has more vehicle miles travelled per day</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Attleboro Alternative would operate on a poor on-time performance and negatively impact the performance of the other train lines.</li> <li>• Compared to the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives, the two Attleboro Alternatives (Electric and/or Diesel) have the:</li> </ul>	The Attleboro Alternative is no longer under consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o most costly construction estimates and highest cost per rider (\$2.01 billion vs. \$1.88 billion and \$1.81 billion);</li> <li>o longest construction time (7 years vs. 4 and 3 years);</li> <li>o most residences and businesses to be displaced (6 residences vs. 4 and 3; 6 businesses vs. 4 and 4);</li> <li>o most lost property tax revenue (\$81,333.00 vs. \$71,099.00 and \$59,614.00);</li> <li>o most moderate and severe impacts from noise (1730/469 # of sensitive receptors vs. 1320/408 and 1409/417);</li> <li>o most direct and indirect (visual and noise) impacts to historic resources (8 direct/32 indirect visual/5 indirect noise vs. 6/24/0 and 7/31/2);</li> <li>o most impacts to high and moderate sensitivity archaeological areas (5/4 vs. 2/3 and 2/2);</li> <li>o most land acquisition and conversion from protected open space, by nearly four times (8.93 acres vs. 1.69 and 1.24);</li> <li>• The Attleboro Bypass requires acquisition of public and private land totaling 15.66 acres from 30 separate parcels. Public land in Norton would need to be purchased, resulting in Article 97 conversions.</li> <li>o most upland habitat loss, primarily associated with the construction of the third track in the Northeast Corridor, (190.86 acres vs. 182.27 and 187.98);</li> <li>• An additional 20.27 acres of wildlife habitat for the rail improvements along the Attleboro Bypass and 0.42 acres of wildlife habitat would be lost for the power substations. The Bypass would create a significant barrier to amphibian movement between vernal pools and upland habitat with loss of genetic diversity from the habitat fragmentation. Edge effects and barriers to wildlife movement along the Bypass would also prevent migration along the dirt powerline corridor between privately protected open space in Norton, Mansfield and Attleboro.</li> <li>• An additional 33.17 acres of wildlife habitat for the rail improvements and 0.14 acres of wildlife habitat would be lost for the power substations.</li> <li>• CAPS data show three times more direct losses in the</li> </ul>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Attleboro Alternatives than any other Alternatives (Page 4.14-99). The 31.2 miles of new track would bisect Priority Habitat and further fragment wildlife corridors created by permanently protected land pieced together by the Towns of Norton, Mansfield and Attleboro, and the Land Preservation Society of Norton, Mansfield Natural Resources Trust, and the Attleboro Land Trust. Canopy gap in new double and single track sections is anywhere between 40-80 feet for single track improvements to 80-120 feet for triple tracks construction. Norton's CAPS maps show significant loss of ecological integrity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o most wetland habitat losses (20.56 acres vs. 11.86 and 10.34);</li> <li>o most the vernal pool losses (5.36 acres vs. 1.77 and 1);</li> <li>• Attleboro Bypass would fill 2.81 acres of wetland with three vernal pools, loss of 3.37 acres of upland habitat for 7 vernal pools within 100 feet, and loss of 12.4 acres of upland habitat for 16 vernal pools within 750 feet.</li> <li>• The Attleboro Secondary would also require fill of wetlands containing vernal pools with an estimated loss of habitat of 0.73 acres, 0.90 acres of upland habitat loss of 4 vernal pools within 100 feet, and 7.14 acres of habitat of 44 vernal pools within 750 feet.</li> <li>o most wetland edge impacts by nearly three times (15.85 acres vs. 5.46 and 5.45);</li> <li>o most total wetland impacts in acres (20.56 acres vs. 11.94 and 10.34);</li> <li>• The Attleboro Alternative will alter 20.56 acres of federally regulated wetland, 240 linear feet of bank, 18.07 acres of BLSF and 62 locations of riverfront area. Overall wetland alteration in the Attleboro Alternatives is listed as 2.1 acres just along the Northeast Corridor and 0.42 acres within the Three-Mile River ACEC.</li> <li>• The 4.71 acres of bordering vegetated wetland (bvw) alteration for the new Attleboro Bypass will occur in undisturbed areas and will have more direct impacts as well as buffer impacts.</li> <li>• Thirty-six wetlands are found along the Attleboro Secondary route in Norton, with six stream crossings, five of</li> </ul>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>which are perennial. The Attleboro Secondary would permanently alter 0.71 acres and temporarily alter 1.05 acres of bordering vegetated wetland. It will also permanently alter 3.64 acres and permanently alter 0.47 acres of and temporarily alter 0.57 acres of Outstanding Resource Waters. Temporary alteration to bank is expected to be 448 linear feet. The assessment of direct wetland impacts should be evaluated with the final route selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o most total wetland impacts within ACECs in acres (2.59 acres vs. 1.72 and 1.72);</li> <li>• Vernal pool habitat within the Three-Mile ACEC (0.12 acres), 0.54 acres of buffer habitat and 3.70 acres of upland habitat would be altered.</li> <li>• A total of 0.89 acres (and 1.43 acres-temporary) of BVW, 0.42 acres (0.67 temporary) will be in the Three-Mile River ACEC for the Attleboro Secondary; 4.14 acres (1.10 temporary) of BLSF, 23 stream crossings (5 perennial), 1 CVP, 4 PVP and 3 field-verified VPs consisting of approximately 0.49 acres (0.67 temporary) of ORW alteration is proposed with this project.</li> <li>• Wetlands within three ACECs and 5.34 acres of Outstanding Resource Waters will be impacted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o most impacts to Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) (5.34 acres vs. 1.71 and 0.95);</li> <li>o greatest number of proposed storm water discharges to waterbodies both for ACECs and non-ORWs;</li> <li>o most habitat fragmentation, resulting from 2.8 mile Attleboro Bypass;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Two BioMap Core habitat areas would be altered in Norton along the Three-Mile River and ACEC. Similarly, two locations of Living Waters in Norton would be altered with new bridges. Bridges would have to be constructed to prevent negative impacts to fisheries or flow of water. Temporary impacts to terrestrial and aquatic wildlife would be severe in the undeveloped sections. Mitigation should be required. Construction should be avoided during the breeding season (April through June) in Attleboro Bypass, as proposed, and portions of the Attleboro Secondary within the Three-Mile River ACEC. Turtle gates and wildlife underpasses should be</li> </ul>	



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>employed along the Attleboro Bypass and portions of the Attleboro Secondary near the Wading River and the Three-Mile River BioMap core areas. Replacement habitat should be incorporated into the plans for the Attleboro Bypass and Attleboro Secondary within the Three-Mile River ACEC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the most construction in drinking water protection areas;</li> <li>o the most discharges to a drinking water protection area;</li> </ul> <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o potential to impact 22 public water supply wells, including 6 in Zone I.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Attleboro Alternatives will impact 17.5 acres of designated farmland, with 7.1 acres of farmland soil to be converted in the Attleboro Secondary. Farmland soils in Norton at the Barrowsville Station include unique farmland soils and farmland soils of statewide importance.</li> </ul>	
L-049.37	Norton Conservation Commission	<p>Greater access to and use of public transportation, such as this proposed rail project, will provide a significant benefit to Massachusetts in terms of reducing emissions from the number of single-passenger commuter cars, bringing us closer to the goals of the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2020. While some riders may not take the train the entire route into Boston, many may find job opportunities at other stops along the route and will help stimulate our local economies and reduce unemployment.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-049.38	Norton Conservation Commission	<p>We are encouraged by the inclusion of LID techniques proposed for stations, including infiltration, permeable pavement and rain gardens.</p>	These techniques were considered, see Chapter 4.17.
F-006.01	New Bedford Harbor Development Commission	<p>I am writing today in support of the South Coast Rail project and the Environmental Impact Statement that is currently being commented upon. To benefit freight and passengers, uncongested access to the Boston area is important. Therefore, the Port of New Bedford prefers the Stoughton route above the Attleboro alternative.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
F-006.02	New Bedford Harbor Development Commission	<p>The benefits of moving freight and people by train are substantial. A train can move freight more efficiently, reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The South Coast Rail project will provide and update a crucial link to the Harbor Development Commission (HDC) of New Bedford, where I serve as the Executive Director. This rail link will give the port an ability to move freight from vessels to rail, with the potential of taking thousands of trucks off of local roads. The savings in road maintenance and fuel consumption will be substantial.</p>	Freight movement routes would remain the same as existing conditions. MBTA does not intend to grant freight carriers access to the Canton area from the south, using the portion of the Stoughton Line that would be reconstructed for the South Coast Rail project. Freight service to Canton is currently provided from the north side, and future High-Speed Rail service on the Northeast Corridor is expected to take into consideration potential conflicts with freight service sharing the corridor.
F-006.03	New Bedford Harbor Development Commission	The South Coast Rail project will also restore passenger rail transportation from South Station in Boston to the South Coast of Massachusetts, catalyzing nearly half a billion dollars in economic development every year.	Thank you for your comment.
F-006.04	New Bedford Harbor Development Commission	In the interest of understanding the importance of rail and freight to the Port of New Bedford, the HDC commissioned a study (enclosed), which was released in April 2011. It is important to keep freight in mind as part of the review and assessment process.	Thank you for your comment.
L-055.01	Town of Canton	It is the Town of Canton's opinion that the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided in the FEIR to properly assess the impacts of the project on the Town of Canton. The attached comment letter provides a more detailed review of the DEIS/DEIR. Several issues have been identified through our review that merit further response from the Proponent in the FEIS/FEIR. These issues include, but are not limited to traffic volumes; capacity analysis; parking; noise, vibration and other abutter impacts; existing and new grade crossings; freight service; and railroad bridges.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.02	Town of Canton	<p>In an effort to clearly identify potential impacts within the Town of Canton, we have separated the areas shown on attached Figure 4.1.54 (Stoughton Alternatives, Stoughton Line Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 1 of 5) into the following sections and discussed in further detail below.</p> <p>1) Canton Junction to Washington Street 2) Pine Street to Will Drive</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-055.03	Town of Canton	<p>Typically, as part of any project, the most recent existing traffic volumes available are used in determining traffic operations and levels-of-service (LOS) on impacted roadways and intersections. The traffic volumes information included on Table 4.1-13d on page 4.1-31 as part of the DEIS/DEIR contains Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) along the roadways within the Town of Canton for the years 2000 and 2002. These include:</p> <p>Street AADT - AADT, Year</p> <p>Washington Street - 18,900, 2002 Pine Street - 4,000, 2000 Will Drive - 2,000, 2002</p> <p>The traffic information contained in the report is outdated and should be supplemented with current data within Canton including impacted, at-grade intersections as part of the Stoughton Alternative. We request that additional peak period traffic counts and average daily traffic information be gathered to confirm the volumes presented in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	Canton is not expected to be impacted by the South Coast Rail project traffic and no new grade crossings are proposed in Canton. Therefore, no traffic improvements or studies are proposed within the Town of Canton.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.04	Town of Canton	<p>The three impacted at-grade crossings within Canton (Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive) are currently active rail crossings that would be modified to allow double track operations. Minimal recommended mitigation improvements are being proposed, but the potential impacts on these crossings should be assessed with additional information.</p> <p>Canton Junction to Washington Street</p> <p>Canton Junction</p> <p>Under the Stoughton Alternative, no work is proposed at the Canton Junction Station.</p> <p>Canton Center</p> <p>As identified on page 3-83 and shown on Figure 3.2-29, Canton Center Station is an existing station that would be modified to accommodate a second track. Modifications include construction of two new platforms and changes to the parking layout in the existing lots near the station.</p> <p>Washington Street</p> <p>As shown in Table 4.1-13d, Washington Street showed AADT of approximately 18,900 vehicles in 2002. Recommended mitigation improvements due to the impacts of the extension of Stoughton line at this location include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Install a traffic signal pre-emption system at two intersections in proximity of the crossing.</li> </ul> <p>Pine Street to Will Drive</p> <p>Pine Street</p> <p>Mitigation includes relocating an existing driveway to the north.</p>	<p>Grade crossing safety improvements are proposed in Canton as summarized in Table 4.1-87. These improvements are not required because of the impact of the project on traffic delays in Canton, which would be minimal because Canton has existing commuter rail service. Therefore, detailed traffic impact studies in Canton were not warranted.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Will Drive</p> <p>No mitigation is being proposed at this location.</p> <p>Further information should be provided by the Proponent clearly showing the proposed mitigation identified above within the limits of Downtown Area to Will Drive, including the Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive at the at-grade crossings.</p> <p>In addition, traffic signal pre-emption/coordination along the Washington Street corridor from Sherman Street to Neponset Street should be provided to address queue lengths and delays.</p>	
L-055.05	Town of Canton	We also request the Proponent to investigate the possibility of implementing upgraded crossing treatments to eliminate the need for whistles and horns within the town of Canton.	Quiet zones to mitigate train horn noise are not proposed at this time, although are discussed as a possible mitigation measure in Chapter 4.6.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.06	Town of Canton	<p>Independent field observations have been conducted by McMahon during the AM and PM peak periods. We observed queuing and delays at several of the at-grade crossings and adjacent intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR within the Town of Canton. The following is a summary of our observations:</p> <p>Canton Junction to Washington Street</p> <p>Canton Center/Washington Street</p> <p>Existing queuing and delays were observed at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street during the peak periods. The approximate duration for the start to end of the flashing gate operation at the at-grade crossing was approximately 1 -2 minutes. During the time that the train crosses Washington Street during the PM Peak hour, queuing began and continued on both sides of the at-grade crossing for approximately 10-15 minutes after the trains had passed through Downtown. In addition, there are existing striped crosswalks but no signal control to allow pedestrians to cross Washington Street to the Canton Center Station. Based on our experience with traffic operations at MBTA commuter rail stations, there are distinct peaks in entering and exiting traffic associated with each train that stops at a station. In addition, the location of the Canton Fire Department headquarters and station on Revere Street results in emergency response vehicles utilizing Washington Street to the north and south. The increase in trains and impacts to ridership, discussed later in this letter, as part of the Stoughton Alternative could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times along Washington Street and should be addressed by the Proponent.</p> <p>Revere Street/Washington Street</p> <p>The impacts of vehicles exiting the Canton Junction and Canton Center Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Washington Street results in</p>	<p>Canton is not expected to be impacted by the South Coast Rail project traffic and no new grade crossings are proposed in Canton. Therefore, no traffic improvements or studies are proposed within the Town of Canton.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>impacts to the Washington Street/Revere Street signalized intersection as well the intersections within the Downtown Area. The increase in trains and impacts to ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times within the Canton Center and Downtown Canton, including Revere Street/Washington Street, during the peak hours and should be addressed by the Proponent.</p> <p>Sherman Street/Washington Street</p> <p>The impacts of vehicles exiting the Canton Junction and Canton Center Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Porter Street results in impacts to the Washington Street/Sherman Street signalized intersection as well the intersections within the Downtown Area. The addition of trains and impacted ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times at the Sherman Street/Washington Street during the peak hours and should be addressed by the Proponent.</p> <p>Washington Street Corridor</p> <p>The impacts of vehicles exiting the Canton Junction and Canton Center Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Washington Street resulted in observed impacts to the Washington Street corridor from Sherman Street to Neponset Street. The addition of trains and impacted ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Washington Street could potentially increase the delays and emergency response times along this corridor during the peak hours and should be addressed by the Proponent.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.07	Town of Canton	<p>The DEIS/DEIR on page 4.1-10 discusses existing and proposed ridership at the existing stations. It states that “since boardings at existing commuter rail stations located near the ends of the existing Providence and Stoughton Commuter Rail Lines are not expected to increase as a consequence of the alternatives, no traffic analyses, beyond the identification of new grade crossing locations, were completed for existing stations or municipalities with existing stations”. Any potential impacts to parking in the Canton Center/Downtown Area and impacts to ridership need to be fully explained by the Proponent. In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Canton Junction and Canton Center stations as part of the Stoughton Alternative. Any information, including a possible origin/destination study of existing vehicles utilizing these two stations should be provided.</p>	<p>The service provided to Canton today is not expected to change with the South Coast Rail project. There is no anticipated project-related parking or traffic impacts in Canton.</p>
L-055.08	Town of Canton	<p>It is stated in the DEIS/DEIR on page 3-82 that “the intended goal that the existing commuter rail station designs would be updated”. In addition, proposed high-level platforms would be constructed at a height that is 4 feet above the track level, allowing for level-boarding onto all the commuter rail coaches for a 9-car train set (approximately 800’ long). Any potential impacts to parking in the Canton Center/Downtown Area and impacts to ridership need to be fully explained by the Proponent.</p>	<p>Canton Center Station would be modified to accommodate a second track. Modifications to the tracks and platforms would require minor changes to the parking layout in the existing lots near the station, and no adjustments to the amount of existing parking spaces would be expected. Section 3.2.15.2 details the modifications and station design for Canton Center Station.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that Canton Center Station would generate a ridership increase. This conclusion is supported by the CTPS modeling in Appendix 3.2-H which shows 710 daily boardings under existing conditions, and 770 daily boardings under the 2035 No-Build condition. Under the Stoughton Electric Alternative boardings at Canton Center would decrease slightly to 700. Therefore, no parking or traffic impacts related to station access trips would occur at Canton Center.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.09	Town of Canton	In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Canton Junction and Canton Center stations as part of the Stoughton Alternative. We request the Proponent address if new ridership projections will lead to the possibility of future station consolidations or modifications.	It is not anticipated that existing stations would generate a ridership increase by the project projection year (2035) that would warrant existing stations to be expanded or consolidated.
L-055.10	Town of Canton	McMahon conducted an independent study regarding accident data for the study area and at-grade intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR. Information was obtained from MassDOT for the most recent three-year period available. This data includes complete yearly accident summaries for 2006, 2007, and 2008. The Accident Summary shown below in Table 1 was prepared to identify potential high accident frequencies at the study area intersections. As shown in the table, 24 accidents were reported over the three year period at the Washington Street and Sherman Street signalized intersection, 24 accidents at the Washington Street and Revere Street signalized intersection, and 9 accidents at the Washington Street and at-grade intersection. Although we have collected the accident data, it is unclear when the safety threshold at the study area and at-grade intersections is met or if they exceed the average accident rates. A thorough assessment should be provided by the Proponent to ensure that these locations include adequate safety measures.	South Coast Rail is not expected to have project-related traffic impacts in Canton. Therefore, no additional analysis to assess safety has been conducted. Information on at-grade crossings in Canton is provided in Chapter 4.1.
L-055.11	Town of Canton	The Proponent should provide additional details on the physical improvements, including structures, visual impacts to abutters, and right-of-way impacts associated with the implementation of the new electrification system.	Impacts of electrified rail are documented throughout the resource specific chapters of the FEIS/FEIR, including property acquisitions (Chapter 4.2) and visual impacts (Chapter 4.5).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.12	Town of Canton	The three impacted at-grade crossings within Canton (Washington Street, Pine Street, and Will Drive) are currently active rail crossings that would be modified to allow double track operations. The Stoughton Alternative requires the reconstruction of existing tracks of the Stoughton Line from Canton Junction to Stoughton, a double track for a distance of 3.8 miles, through existing residential and commercial areas. We request the Proponent provide information regarding the proposed limits of the track layout and proximity to abutters within Canton. In addition, please identify and address any associated vibration and noise impacts to these abutters.	Sections 2.2 and 3.2 of the Noise and Vibration Mitigation Plan provide an updated analysis of noise and vibration impacts, respectively, based on the current track design and changes to train schedules, which resulted in improvements to travel speeds and improved service. The total number of trains operating during a typical day remains unchanged. No noise or vibration impacts to sensitive receptors were identified.
L-055.13	Town of Canton	Figure 3.2-29 shows the proposed reconstruction of Canton Center Station due the impacts of the Stoughton Alternative. We request the Proponent provide additional information related to the revised parking layouts at Canton Center Station, including parking utilization projections, and existing data and any other relevant data associated with operation of these parking lots and abutting roadways. In addition, any direct or indirect impacts to the reconstructed Canton Center Station due to potential changes to parking should be investigated by the Proponent.	See response to comment L-055.07. Ridership would not increase and parking would not be impacted.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.14	Town of Canton	<p>According to the DEIS/DEIR, existing train frequency from Canton Junction Station to Stoughton Station, along the existing MBTA Commuter Rail alignment, ranges from 17roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. There is also freight service several times a week between Canton Junction station and Central Street in Stoughton. Proposed operating plans for the Stoughton Alternative would include three peak periods trains to each of the terminal station of New Bedford and Fall River with a fourth train operating near the peak rush hour period. This equates to approximately one train every forty minutes from Fall River/New Bedford and one every twenty minutes from Taunton northward. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from each of the terminal stations and every ninety minutes from Taunton northward. The DEIS/DEIR states that this translates to nine round trips per weekday operation from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day. However, if each terminal station is served by four peak/shoulder trains and six off-peak trains, along with one round trip to East Taunton, the total would be 42 trains passing through Canton. We request the Proponent provide a concise comparison of the number of peak and off-peak trips per each terminal station from Fall River and New Bedford.</p>	<p>Table 3.2-5 outlines the operating plan for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives, including the planned station stops. There would be no stops at the proposed stations under the existing or No-Build conditions.</p>
L-055.15	Town of Canton	<p>We suggest that any impacts of the freight service along the Stoughton line be clarified and safety impacts addressed. In addition, due to the recent accident of a freight train and MBTA Commuter Rail train in the vicinity of the Canton Junction station, any potential safety concerns between freight and passenger trains needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>The South Coast Rail project would not impact freight service. Accommodations for freight service such as sidings and bypass tracks have been incorporated in the design for each station along the Stoughton Alternative. The Canton Junction Station is an existing station along the Northeast Corridor that would be used for the Stoughton Alternative, but no changes to this station are needed or planned.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-055.16	Town of Canton	Table 3.2-19 in the DEIS/DEIR provides a list of bridge crossings (both undergrade and overhead) that would require rehabilitation or reconstruction as part of the Stoughton Alternative for the South Coast Rail Project. Additional specific details regarding the rehabilitation or reconstruction at the existing railroad bridges within the Town of Canton, including Revere Street, Forge Pond, Bolivar Street, Beaver Pond and the historic Canton Viaduct should be provided by the Proponent.	The commuter rail currently provides service in Canton. Proposed extension of that service would require improvements to three bridges: Forge Pond, Bolivar Street, and Mill Brook.
L-055.17	Town of Canton	Any impacts to the Canton Station Train Station during construction, including hours of construction, dust and noise, temporary busing, and parking impacts should be addressed by the Proponent as well as potential parking and traffic operations impacts along the abutting local roadways during construction.	Construction is described in the Construction Staging Technical Report (Appendix 3.2-F). Temporary construction impacts are discussed in each resource topic addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.
E-001.01	Town of Easton	<p>Given that the DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, we respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. In addition, we are coordinating the comments of over a dozen town boards, committees, and departments so that we may focus the comments of the town and avoid duplication. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments.</p> <p>Therefore, we ask for an additional 60 days. Thank you for your consideration.</p>	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-056.01	Town of Easton	<p>While the information provided in the DEIS/DEIR does not seem to clearly demonstrate that project alternatives within the Stoughton corridor are the least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), in the DEIS/DEIR, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) identifies the Stoughton family of alternatives as the preferred corridor for the project. The selection of an alternative within this corridor as the LEDPA would have significant impacts on the Town of Easton. As the DEIS/DEIR only provides summarized information for each project alternative, we request that the Final EIS/EIR be required to provide additional, detailed information on project impacts and mitigation measures. Please see below for our comments to specific concerns we have at this point.</p>	Additional information on mitigation measures is provided in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-056.02	Town of Easton	<p>Project alternatives within the Stoughton corridor will result in ten new at-grade crossings, many with limited visibility, or line-of-site. These proposed crossings are safety hazards for motorists and pedestrians. During operation, these crossings may result in emergency response delays. The Town of Easton requests that the proponent provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety education program - Provide safety information to children within the school system and a general public awareness campaign.</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossings -Install signage indicating the rail line is active and direct individuals to safe crossing locations.</li> <li>• Deterrents - Provide creative means of deterring people from dangerous crossings. Recent transit studies demonstrate that people quickly become inured to typical warning signs.</li> <li>• Safety training for first responders on how to respond to and operate in and around the rail system. This should include not just anticipating a moving train blocking a crossing, but the potential for a train to be stuck at a crossing or the crossing gate to be malfunctioning.</li> </ul>	See Chapter 4.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-056.03	Town of Easton	<p>The DEIS/DEIR proposes two station locations in the Town of Easton, one in North Easton Village and one in North Easton adjacent to the Roche Bros Plaza. Rail service along the Stoughton corridor would also require new grade crossings at Elm Street, Oliver Street, Short Street, Depot Street (Route 123), Purchase Street, Prospect Street, and Foundry Street (Route 106). Additional traffic generated by the new stations and additional vehicle queuing at the new grade crossings would significantly impact the Town's roadway network. In order to help offset these project impacts, the Town of Easton is requesting the following transportation mitigation measures be included in the FEIR/FEIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Upgrade Route 138 (Stoughton town line to Elm Street) - Route 138 is the only way to access the proposed North Easton station. Roadway improvements along this segment of Route 138, which is largely un-signalized and under current traffic conditions has failing Levels of Service, should include Signalized intersections at Union Street and Elm Street. Improvements should also include sidewalks and bicycle lanes to enhance pedestrian safety and environmentally responsible transportation options to access the station.</li> <li>•Upgrade Union Street (Brockton town line to Route 138) - The existing condition of the roadway is adequate for the current amount of daily traffic. However, this roadway will likely serve as a feeder for vehicles coming from the east accessing the North Easton station and will require improvements to accommodate higher amounts of traffic.</li> <li>•Traffic improvements at the intersection of Route 138 and Route 123 – This gateway intersection is included in the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan as a Priority Development Area. These improvements will enhance the functionality of a critical intersection that will see an increase in traffic due to the proposed station locations.</li> <li>•Traffic calming measures in North Easton Village - Although the DEIS/DEIR assumes that most riders will either walk or bike to this station, there will be a significant increase</li> </ul>	<p>Each of these proposed traffic mitigation measures described in Section 4.1.5, Mitigation Measures, of the DEIS/DEIR are based on existing conditions and the current (conceptual) level of project design. During preliminary and final design, MassDOT's Highway division will coordinate with the Town of Easton to further develop the mitigation outlined in the DEIS/DEIR (potentially including traffic signals, sidewalks and bicycle lanes, accommodations for increased traffic, and traffic calming measures at these locations).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>in traffic, vehicle queuing, and related parking issues during peak travel times. The DEIS/DEIR does indicate that traffic calming measures will be provided for this location. We request that the FEIR/FEIS provide more detail on these measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Expand public transportation connections - In coordination with regional transit providers (e.g., BAT), MassDOT should work to expand existing routes or create new routes to new rail stations.</li> </ul>	
L-056.04	Town of Easton	<p>The Stoughton corridor bisects both local and national historic districts that are home to many of the Town's most significant historic and architectural landmarks such as the Ames Shovel Works complex, historic railway station, Oakes Ames Memorial Hall and the Ames Free Library. The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.5-39 that, "adverse impacts to the visual environment in the vicinity of the new Easton Village station would be substantial". The FEIR/FEIS should include plans that show a full-grade separation at Main Street with no visual impact resulting from any vertical or horizontal realignment of the tracks and details on how the new station will be sensitively incorporated into the historic fabric of this area. The DEIS/DEIR also acknowledges there will be visual impacts to residential neighborhoods and open spaces along the corridor. While the DEIS/DEIR provides information on how visual impacts may generally be addressed with fencing or grade separation, we request the FEIR/FEIS provide specific measures to address these visual impacts.</p>	<p>A new overhead bridge, replacing the existing structure, is proposed at the Main Street crossing in Easton, as listed in Table 3.2-14 and described in Appendix 3.2-B.</p> <p>Visual impacts and mitigation have been described in a level of detail appropriate given the current conceptual level of design. Visual mitigation measures would be further defined at the site-specific level during preliminary and final design work for the selected alternative.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-056.05	Town of Easton	<p>Portions of the Stoughton corridor run through dense residential neighborhoods in the North Easton Village area. Many homes, commercial and historical properties are immediately adjacent to the ROW or in very close proximity. Further, since the deactivation of the old rail line, new homes have been constructed in close proximity to the abandoned ROW. In order to fully understand and mitigate for noise and vibration impacts, we request the FEIR/FEIS include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify all properties that will be impacted by the noise and vibration generated by the train. The list of impacted areas in the DEIR/DEIS is missing several streets and individual properties.</li> <li>•Create a baseline assessment of existing historic structures; follow-up with a 5-year assessment to determine if there are vibration impacts</li> <li>•No whistles at grade crossings</li> <li>•Provide more detail on the likelihood of freight service, including the hours of operation and potential cargo</li> <li>•Sound barriers and fences in accordance with Federal guidelines</li> </ul>	See Chapters 4.6 and 4.7 for additional information on noise and vibration impacts, and mitigation.
L-056.06	Town of Easton	<p>Table 4.10-16 summarizes the Potential Direct Effects to Protected Open Spaces and ACECs. This table shows no impact in Easton. However, tables 4.10-9, and figures 4.10 (a-e) indicate acquisition of Easton public conservation land. We request that the FEIR/FEIS include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Clarify whether Easton conservation land is intended to be acquired and if so the amount to be acquired.</li> <li>•Land in an equal amount and of equal ecological value should be provided in exchange for the acquisition.</li> </ul>	Easton conservation land would not be acquired for the Stoughton or Whittenton Alternatives (see Chapter 4.10).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-056.07	Town of Easton	<p>The DEIR/DEIS states that the Department of Conservation and Recreation describes the Hockomock Swamp ACEC as one of the most extensive inland wildlife habitats in southeastern Massachusetts and includes outstanding Atlantic white cedar swamp and acidic fen wetland communities. The Hockomock Swamp also provides habitat for at least 13 species listed with the NHESP and is listed in the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan as a Priority Protection Area. The DEIS/DEIR identifies a number of direct and indirect impacts that expected from construction activities, restoration of the railbed and increasing the canopy bed over the railbed. The impacts would include hydrological changes; habitat and population fragmentation; edge effects; noise and vibration; and restrictions to wildlife movement. Since detailed plans have not been completed, the full impact on habitat and natural resources cannot be fully known. In order to fully understand the impact of the project on habitat and protected species, the FEIR/FEIS needs to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A baseline assessment of habitat value and rare species populations, using the information gathered during the analysis process; follow-up with a five-year study to assess impacts from the rail on those habitat values and species</li> <li>•Plans that include implementation for appropriate mitigation to restore affected values and populations to baseline conditions</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 4.15 provides a baseline assessment of habitat values and rare species distributions. Mitigation is proposed in accordance with the requirements of the state-agency with jurisdiction over state-listed species (NHESP). A five year follow-up monitoring study is not required by NHESP. If required by NHESP in the Conservation and Management Permit, MassDOT fund a study of the Hockomock Swamp population of Blandings turtle to assist NHESP in developing long-term protective measures.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-056.08	Town of Easton	<p>The DEIS/DEIR indicates wetlands were evaluated using GIS data layers, orthophotos, and visual inspections of critical areas and indicates more detailed analysis of resource areas will be done prior to the design process. The DEIS/DEIR acknowledges the method used provides a best guess estimate as to wetlands impacts and that full impacts will be assessed during the design process once the LEDPA has been selected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A superseding ORAD, issued by DEP in 2000, confirmed some wetland resources areas within the Easton portion of the ROW. The ORAD stated wetlands not directly adjacent to the ROW would need to be addressed during the Notice of Intent process. Therefore, it is expected that the wetland boundaries will be finalized when the Notice of Intent is filed with the Easton Conservation Commission.</li> <li>•Wetland alteration or loss within the Easton portion of the rail line will be replicated in Easton at a ratio of 2:1.</li> </ul>	Information on wetland impacts and mitigation is provided in Chapter 4.16.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-056.09	Town of Easton	<p>The rail line is located immediately adjacent to the Zone I wellhead protection area and is within the Interim Wellhead Protection area and Zone II wellhead protection area of three of the six wells that supply Easton's drinking water. Any adverse impact to these wells could have a devastating effect on the Town's ability to provide an adequate water supply to its residents. Several water bodies within Easton would also be receptors of aerial deposition of diesel exhaust. The FEIR/FEIS should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate, in detail, how the project will fully comply with Massachusetts Stormwater Management regulations.</li> <li>• Prohibit the use of herbicides within the Town's Aquifer Protection District.</li> <li>• Establish a Performance Guarantee against potential releases of Oils or Hazardous Materials that result in the contamination and subsequent disuse of any or all of Easton's s drinking water wells. The amount of the guarantee should be equal to the cost of obtaining drinking water from another source (e.g. advancement of new wells; purchase of water from another supplier) and should be increased by an amount annually that reasonably anticipates increases to said cost.</li> <li>• Provide for a 2-year pre-construction period of water quality testing and analysis to establish baseline conditions of the water bodies that would be receptors of aerial deposition of diesel exhaust. This baseline analysis should be followed by a five-year assessment to determine any impacts.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 4.17 documents the ability of the project to meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards without a variance. Chapter 4.17 also documents compliance with the Massachusetts Stormwater Standards (310 CMR 10.05).</p> <p>A vegetation management plan (VMP) and yearly operating plan (YOP) will be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture for review and comment.</p> <p>The proposed project does not involve any components that would result in the contamination and subsequent disuse of drinking water wells.</p> <p>The air quality analysis described in Chapter 4.9 demonstrated that the aerial deposition of diesel engine train emissions is not a substantial source of pollution of water resources (wetlands) because of the very low concentrations of pollutants in the vicinity of the train track.</p>
E-028.01	Town of Mansfield and Natural Resources Trust	<p>The attached document is a press release I wrote for the Natural Resources Trust newsletter and the Mansfield Selectmen and Planning Board. I wrote it in my position as the Mansfield Commissioner of SRPEDD and as a member of the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force. It represents the town's position and the Natural Resources Trust's position on the Project.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-028.02	Town of Mansfield and Natural Resources Trust	<p>There were definitive criteria established by the Executive Office of Transportation and Army Corps of Engineers for the selection of the route. The following spread sheets depict the results of extensive research and study by the EOT to evaluate the criteria. This information along with an Environmental Impact Study done by the Corps will be used to determine the route.</p> <p>After reviewing this data it seems obvious to me the Stoughton route is the preferred route but the decision will be made by the Army Corps of Engineers and on their schedule.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
E-028.03	Town of Mansfield and Natural Resource Trust	<p>If the Attleboro Route is selected it will have significant impact on Mansfield. It will require the construction of the Attleboro bypass, a strictly commuter track to connect the Attleboro Secondary Line to the NY/NH Main line corridor in Mansfield. The bypass is three miles long and will run through Norton, Attleboro and Mansfield, connecting to the Main Line just west of Gilbert Street in Mansfield. This third set of tracks will then be added to the existing two sets of tracks on the Main Line to Boston. This will require the taking of land and buildings along the main line from Gilbert Street to the Foxboro town line.</p> <p>It will require the widening of all the bridges and underpasses along the route, the relocation of the train station, land taking in the Great Woods Conservation Area and in a Priority Protection Area between Gilbert Street and the Attleboro and Norton town lines. The bridges that will be widened are at North Main Street, Route 106, Route 140, School Street, Elm Street and Gilbert Street. This construction will take years to complete, cause unimaginable traffic problems for years throughout Mansfield and will not provide any benefit to the town.</p>	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Chapter 3.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-031.01	Town of Norton	The Town of Norton has been at the forefront of the campaign opposing the Attleboro Alternative for South Coast Rail since 1995. We have worked with the other communities who would be impacted by this ill-advised route, including Attleboro, Mansfield, and Taunton. The Norton Board of Selectmen, Mansfield Board of Selectmen, as well as the Mayors and City Councilors of Attleboro and Taunton, and elected representatives in the State House have gone on record repeatedly voicing solidarity in our position that the Attleboro Alternative should be eliminated as a route for South Coast Rail.	Thank you for your comment.
L-031.02	Town of Norton	The Norton Board of Selectmen has also been consistent in supporting the restoration of commuter rail service to New Bedford, Fall River, and our sister city of Taunton via the Original (Straight) Stoughton Route. We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR and optimistic that the final reports will eliminate the Attleboro Alternative from any further consideration.	Thank you for your comment.
L-042.01	Town of Raynham	Enclosed please find a list of mitigation measures which the town of Raynham believes would be necessary should the so-called Stoughton Alternative be chosen as the preferred route.	See responses to comments L-042.02-11.
L-042.02	Town of Raynham	Commuter rail stop that is compatible with the Town and accessible to residents.	The proposed stations are accessible.
L-042.03	Town of Raynham	No whistles at grade crossings.	Noise impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.6, including train horn noise impacts. Establishing quiet zones at grade crossings is discussed as a possible mitigation option, although it is noted that MassDOT is not proposing quiet zones at this time.
L-042.04	Town of Raynham	Road improvements to Rt. 138 to be engineered, permitted and constructed by the State.	Proposed improvements to Route 138 are described in Chapter 3, Alternatives. A grade-separated crossing would be constructed as part of the Stoughton Alternative.
L-042.05	Town of Raynham	Sound barriers in accordance with Federal guidelines to protect residences along the route.	See Chapter 4.6 for the list of locations where noise barriers are proposed.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-042.06	Town of Raynham	Any wetland restoration, mitigation and replication required must be within the Town of Raynham.	Requiring all mitigation to be located in the Town of Raynham would not be reasonable, see Chapter 4.16 for information on the factors considered in the site search process.
L-042.07	Town of Raynham	Mitigation for homeowners whose property values are negatively affected by proximity of the rail line in the form of full market value.	No mitigation for property value impacts is proposed as these effects cannot be precisely determined. These potential impacts (and benefits) are discussed in Chapter 4.3.
L-042.08	Town of Raynham	Public safety facility in North Raynham.	MassDOT will not fund a public safety facility in North Raynham as part of the South Coast Rail project.
L-042.09	Town of Raynham	Safety education program for school children in public schools.	The South Coast Rail project is committed to safety and will implement Operation Lifesaver to educate communities about the dangers surrounding at-grade crossings.
L-042.10	Town of Raynham	Mitigation for North Raynham Water District for any negative effects on wells.	No negative effects on wells are anticipated with mitigation, see Chapter 4.17.
L-042.11	Town of Raynham	If chosen route crosses Route 138, preference is for the train to pass underneath Route 138 rather than at-grade.	The Route 138 crossing would be grade separated.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-004.01	Town of Stoughton	<p>As you know, the DEIS/DEIR consists of 2,500 pages and includes voluminous data and highly complex technical analysis on a myriad of very important issues. This complex information, published for the first time at the end of March, 2011, has been several years in the making. We respectfully suggest that a public comment period of only two months on such a highly complex document is inadequate and not in the public interest.</p> <p>Moreover, the selection of the "Stoughton Alternative" as the preferred alternative for the project raises enormous concerns for the Town with respect to a number of issues within the USACE's jurisdiction, including public safety, land use planning, environmental, historic properties, property ownership, aesthetics and economic concerns, and the needs and welfare of its residents. The Town respectfully requests a 120-day extension of the May 27, 2011 public comment deadline so that it has sufficient time to evaluate the report with appropriate consultants and submit meaningful comments.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-020.01	Town of Stoughton	<p>I previously requested an extension of the public comment period on the DEIS/DEIR, currently set to expire on May 27, 2011. An extension has also been requested by State Senator Brian A. Joyce, and State Representatives, William C. Galvin and Louis L. Kafka, by correspondence dated April 5, 2011.</p> <p>On May 5, 2011, State Senator Joyce hosted a meeting to discuss the project with representatives of all interested parties in the "Stoughton Alternative," including State legislators for, and local officials from, the Towns of Stoughton, Easton, Canton, and Raynham, the project proponent, the Governor's office, and the EOEEA. My client again requested an extension of public comment deadline on the DEIS/DEIR by 90 days, up to and including August 27, 2011, which request was supported by the other potentially affected communities present.</p> <p>I would appreciate if you would be kind enough to reconsider our request for an extension of the public comment period on the grounds set forth in my prior letter and in consideration of the issues discussed on May 5, 2011 and have someone from your staff contact me to confirm whether the extension will be granted.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.01	Town of Stoughton	<p>At the outset, the Town respectfully contends that it was unreasonable that the project proponent and the state and federal permitting authorities, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs ("EOEEA") and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("USACE"), were unwilling to even entertain a reasonable extension of the public comment deadline of May 27, 2011.</p> <p>It is simply not reasonable to expect meaningful public comment on the complex issues described in the 2500-page DEIS/DEIR within such a short timeframe. The denial of a reasonable extension precludes effective expert analysis and/or peer review of the voluminous data and underlying methodology upon which the project proponent claims a compelling need for this staggeringly expensive public project and hinders responsible and objective scrutiny of the project.</p> <p>The Town reserves the right to challenge the arbitrary and capricious nature of the decision denying a reasonable extension of the public comment period and the substantial rights affected thereby, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to obtain expert analysis and/or peer review of the methodology upon which the project proponent claims that this project serves some compelling public need, that such need outweighs the adverse effects of the project, and that such adverse effects can be adequately mitigated.</p>	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-079.02	Town of Stoughton	Notwithstanding the foregoing reservation of rights, the Town submits these written comments to urge the USACE to deny approval of the "Stoughton Alternative" as contrary to the public interest, and for the EOEEA to determine that the DEIS/DEIR is inadequate and require a supplemental draft, pursuant to 301 CMR §11.08(8)(b), addressing the issues noted below.	A supplemental DEIS/DEIR was not required.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.03	Town of Stoughton	The stated purpose of the South Coast Rail project is unsound. The alleged purpose of the project is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility." However, there is no relevant or sound demographic or statistical analysis to conclude that there is a substantial Boston commuting market located in the Fall River/New Bedford area, and no basis to conclude that there is any compelling need for commuter rail service between these two widely disparate regions.	The need for the project is addressed in Chapter 2.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.04	Town of Stoughton	<p>Furthermore, there is no basis to conclude that "regional mobility" will be substantially improved by the extension of the commuter rail through the Town of Stoughton and points south to Fall River/New Bedford, as the extension is unlikely to do anything other than draw riders from other means of public transportation without any appreciable reduction in vehicle miles traveled.</p> <p>Means of Transportation to Work data for towns along the Old Colony Middleborough/Lakeville extension and along the Greenbush line demonstrate the actual impact of the commuter rail on commuting patterns for residents. The Middleborough/Lakeville line opened in 1997. As of the 1990 Census, almost no residents of Middleborough or Lakeville used the commuter rail as a way to get to work. By the 2000 Census, 2.0% of Lakeville residents and 2.6% of Middleborough residents used the commuter rail to get to work. From 2000 until the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, which is the most recent data available, the use of the rail as a means of transportation to work has declined on a percentage basis in some areas.</p> <p>In Lakeville, the increase was nominal up 0.2%, to 2.2%. In Middleborough, usage declined based on those surveyed to 1.9%. These statistics are very similar to those for towns located along the newly constructed Greenbush line, which saw a ridership of the commuter rail increase of only 1.9% to 2.2% of those surveyed between the opening of the Greenbush line and the most recent Census data from the 2005-2009 American Community Surveys.</p> <p>Moreover, approximately 25% of these riders switched to the commuter rail from another means of public transportation. Thus, these statistics indicate that the extension or re-opening of a rail line not only does not drive significant increases in rail ridership, but it also merely results in more competition to other modes of public transportation, with no appreciable reduction in the amount of vehicle miles traveled on the roadways of the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>The FEIS/FEIR includes ridership analysis that shows the Stoughton Electric Alternative would provide an overall benefit of 310,200 fewer vehicle miles traveled.</p>

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Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.05	Town of Stoughton	<p>Further, Journey to Work data from the 2000 Census, which is the most recent available at a detailed level, as well as Wage and Employment data from the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development for Fall River and New Bedford indicate that less than 2.0% (695 New Bedford residents and 646 Fall River residents) of residents of either city work in Boston and, therefore, would benefit from the rail extension and the opportunity to use the commuter rail to travel to work. The majority of residents of these two cities work in Fall River, New Bedford, Rhode Island, and other car commuting locations which would not be served by the South Coast Rail extension.</p> <p>The 2000 Journey to Work data correlates reasonably well with the Journey to Work data from the American Community Survey of 2005-2009 which indicates that 74.9% of Fall River residents and 80.7% of New Bedford residents surveyed work within the same county in which they live. In New Bedford, the primary industries of employment are Health Care and Social Assistance (8,462), Manufacturing (6,664), Educational Services (2,811), Retail Trade (2,596), and Accommodation and Food Services (2,307). These primary employers are also some of the lowest paying industries based on the Labor Department data.</p> <p>Fall River's primary employment industries are the same as those of New Bedford. The industries that employed the most residents of Fall River as of end of year 2009 are Health Care and Social Assistance (10,193), Manufacturing (4,644), Retail Trade (3,187), Educational Services (2,390), and Accommodation and Food Services (2,333). As with New Bedford, these primary employers are also some of the lowest paying industries based on the Labor Department data.</p> <p>While the project proponent argues that the lack of public transit to Boston "may" impact the economic development of the New Bedford/Fall River area, the primary industries that residents of Fall River and New Bedford work in, more</p>	Ridership modeling using established practices and methodologies indicated a demand in the growing South Coast Region for public transportation.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		logically lead to the conclusion that the addition of public transportation by extending the South Coast rail will make a marginal difference in the number of people commuting to Boston for work. Based on the Journey to Work data that shows that a limited number of people from the region travel to Boston for work, the state of the Boston commercial market, and the limited success other new rail lines have had in attracting ridership, there is no evidence that the extension of the South Coast line will spur significant ridership from Bristol County nor will it drive any significant employment opportunities.	
L-079.06	Town of Stoughton	<p>The proponents of South Coast Rail argue that ridership along the Stoughton line will increase by extending the line and will provide a means of access to work for New Bedford and Fall River residents. As noted above, however, there is no evidence to support this argument based on Transportation to Work data for residents of other towns where a rail line has recently been opened.</p> <p>Means of Transportation to Work data for towns along the Old Colony Middleborough/Lakeville extension and along the Greenbush line estimate the impact of the commuter rail on commuting patterns for residents. These data show at most a 2.2% increase in commuter rail use as a means of transportation to work since the rail opened for both the Old Colony and Greenbush lines. On the Old Colony line, the use of the rail as a means of transportation to work has declined on a percentage basis in some areas as of the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.</p> <p>Again, these statistics plainly indicate that the extension or re-opening of a rail line does not drive significant increases in rail ridership.</p>	Ridership projections for the South Coast Rail Project were developed by CTPS using accepted professional practices and methodologies approved by the Federal Transit Administration.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.07	Town of Stoughton	<p>The South Coast Rail Plan inaccurately suggests that the rail expansion will increase property values in the affected communities in addition to other economic benefits such as new development. The project proponent also makes misplaced claims of fulfilling "smart growth" concepts such as "transit-oriented" development. These claims are entirely illusory as there is not a single concrete instance of a vibrant economic community arising around the vicinity of a newly constructed rail line or train station in. the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Commuter rail locations are exactly that, locations for commuters to park their cars and travel somewhere else. The noise and vibration of commuter trains, and the splitting up of roadways and sidewalks along the rail crossings, lessens the economic value of businesses and residences located in close proximity to rail lines and train stations.</p> <p>The blighted condition of the areas around the location of the train station in downtown Stoughton is instructive. The location of the rail line into downtown Stoughton has never been conducive to economic development of the downtown. In fact, the MBTA has allowed the historic train station to fall into an abandoned state of disrepair. The parking areas follow no logical or conducive patterns toward aesthetics or reasonably considered traffic flow or development design standards. The limited residential and commercial uses which exist in downtown Stoughton exist despite the existence of the commuter rail station, and only because of the dogged determination of the local residents and business owners in trying to maintain a viable downtown district.</p> <p>For Stoughton, the Corridor Plan projects 1,510 new dwelling units and 425,000 square feet of commercial development within one mile of the station in the next 20 years resulting from the rail line extension. However, this projection is plainly refuted by the damage the rail line into downtown Stoughton has already caused and is also refuted by the experience of the new constructed Greenbush line through Hingham, where there has been no development anywhere</p>	<p>While the emergence of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) cannot be predicted with certainty or accuracy and is subject to many other factors as well, including local conditions, the South Coast Rail Project would provide additional transportation options for the area around train stations, which could benefit development around the station.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>near the scale of the Corridor Plan's projections.</p> <p>The reality of Stoughton's current development patterns with the commuter rail already in existence shows that development continues to occur predominantly in highway-accessible locations. Again, the existing rail line into Stoughton only detracts from viable thriving residential or commercial uses in the downtown. There is no basis to conclude that extending the rail line through Stoughton would significantly shift current development patterns unless financial incentives are provided to encourage development in the downtown.</p>	
L-079.08	Town of Stoughton	<p>MassDOT predicts that the South Coast extension will induce people to give up their cars to ride the train. Current ridership numbers refute that claim. Approximately 5.0% (600+/- people) of Stoughton residents surveyed in the American Community Surveys of 2005 to 2009 reported use of public transportation as their means of transportation to work, approximately 75% of which use the commuter rail. The majority - 83% (10,600 +/- people) - drove to work.</p> <p>Data from the US Census indicate that public transportation ridership in Stoughton has decreased between 2000 and 2010 despite increases in population. A review of primary workplace locations for Stoughton residents underscores that while almost 2,700 Stoughton residents worked in Boston as of 2000, the balance - more than 11,000 people - work in car commuting locations such as Canton, Brockton, Quincy, and Norwood.</p>	The ridership modeling conducted for the South Coast rail alternatives indicates a shift from automobile ridership to rail, resulting in an overall reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.09	Town of Stoughton	<p>Evidence from the Greenbush line shows that the MBTA has failed to meet its ridership projections on that line and that a number of the Greenbush line riders have switched from using the commuter ferry, not from driving their cars. A survey of Greenbush line riders in 2009 found that 46.6% had switched from the commuter rail from the boat while 44.5% previously drove to Boston. David Luberooff, executive director of the Rappaport Institute at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, whose institute has studied the effect of commuter rail on Greater Boston, said that many people who choose to ride trains had been in carpools before, not driving alone into Boston. "Given that we're talking about a couple of thousand people, the impact on congestion will be completely minimal," he said.</p> <p>According to studies of the Central Transportation Planning Staff report in March, 2010, Greenbush commuter rail ridership is approximately 40% less than that projected.</p>	The ridership modeling for the South Coast rail conducted by CTPS was conducted in accordance with established methodologies approved by the Federal Transit Administration.
L-079.10	Town of Stoughton	<p>The likely impact of the South Coast rail extension on decreasing highway traffic around Stoughton appears limited, especially given that ridership in Stoughton has been declining in recent years. Further, new stations south of Stoughton will attract people from Easton and Raynham and other surrounding towns who may currently commute from Stoughton away. The declining ridership of existing Stoughton residents coupled with existing riders being drawn away by more southerly station stops means that the extension of the South Coast rail will result in fewer people in downtown Stoughton but more intense train traffic through town, only now much more frequent and intense, in both directions.</p>	Transportation impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.11	Town of Stoughton	<p>The Town of Stoughton's population increased by about 4,050 people between the 2000 and 2010 Census, with an estimated increase of 1,564 households over the period. This correlates with the amount of new development that has been occurring in Stoughton, primarily in rental housing but also some single-family and condominium homes. Much of the new development has been occurring in North Stoughton, West Stoughton, and on the Easton town line, not in Stoughton's downtown.</p> <p>The local effect of the recent state and national housing recession can be seen in the number of units sold and their median price in the last few years. Sales prices for single-family and condominium sales in Stoughton increased for single-family homes between 1999 and 2005, but then declined steadily through 2009. Condominium prices increased between 1999 and 2006 and then declined through 2010. Single-family sale prices in Stoughton rebounded in 2010 but whether that trend will continue or if condominium prices will rebound is unclear from year to date data.</p> <p>The number of sales has also fluctuated over the past 10 years, although after peaking in 2004 for single-family homes and in 2005 for condominiums the number of sales declined through 2007 for single-families and 2008 for condominiums. The number of single-family sales rebounded in 2008 and 2009 but fell again in 2010, while the number of condominium sales has held relatively steady since 2008.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.12	Town of Stoughton	While Stoughton's population increased from 2000 to 2010, the majority of residential development in Stoughton occurred in more suburban settings and highway accessible locations, from North Stoughton to West Stoughton to the Easton line, as shown in the table to follow. Little residential development has occurred downtown and the fact that there is walkable access to public transportation is not a driving force in development patterns in Stoughton. As a result, extending the commuter rail through Stoughton is unlikely to cause any significant increase in housing development in Stoughton's downtown or in commuter rail usage. Even with reasonable population growth in Stoughton, public transit usage declined, another indication that extending the line will not benefit Stoughton.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.13	Town of Stoughton	<p>There are five existing street crossings in use along the rail line in Stoughton, with already unacceptably problematic safety and traffic issues which will become insurmountable by the increased intensity of use proposed by the South Coast Rail Project. There are three additional long inactive crossings which the project proponent seeks to add to the line to create a total of eight at-grade street crossings, posing yet more problems once the new line is constructed and up and running.</p> <p>The grade crossings at issue are at Central Street, Simpson Street, School Street, Porter Street, Wyman Street, Brock Street, Plain Street, and Morton Street. Approximately 2,000 children are going in and out of the schools located in close proximity to the grade crossing at Simpson Street during rush hour times of the morning and afternoon. Traffic ties up in the area and children also cross the rail line on foot. The proposed increased intensity of use, with trains traveling much more frequently in both directions and at greater speeds, poses unacceptable safety issues which the project proponent wholly fails to address in the DEIS/DEIR.</p> <p>Further, the School Street, Porter Street, and Wyman Street intersections are already at a failing level in terms of safety and traffic congestion.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR is entirely lacking in sufficient information to properly assess and mitigate the impacts caused by the proposed dramatic increase in the intensity of use. For instance, the traffic information contained in the report is outdated and must be supplemented with meaningful existing data. The existing and proposed new at-grade crossings will require additional traffic operational analysis, including delays and queue lengths in order to assess their impacts.</p>	Public safety impacts at grade crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.14	Town of Stoughton	Additional information related to the revised parking layouts in the downtown area, including parking utilization projections, and existing data should also be provided. Further details regarding the proposed closing of Morton Street and the private driveways to the south as well as the bypass roadway to be constructed to the private grade separated crossing on Topham Farm Road must also be provided.	A revised design for the Stoughton Station is presented in Chapter 3.
L-079.15	Town of Stoughton	Further, the report is wholly lacking in any reasonable assessment of the impact of freight service along the Stoughton line. These issues must be clarified and safety impacts addressed.	Freight services is anticipated to continue on the track segments where freight is currently provided (on the Stoughton Line north of Stoughton Station, on the Attleboro Secondary, on the Stoughton Line in Taunton between Longmeadow Road and Weir Junction, and on the New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary south of Weir Junction). No future freight service is currently planned or anticipated on the currently out-of-service Whittenton Branch or Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road.
L-079.16	Town of Stoughton	Considering the traffic safety and congestion issues involved in this project proposal and sound municipal land use planning principles, the only viable option to reasonably mitigate the increased intensity of use contemplated by this project proposal is to depress the rail line from the Simpson Street crossing in the vicinity of the schools into the area of the existing station in the downtown area at Wyman Street. The topography in this area is favorable to a reasonably inexpensive depression of the line in this area. If the project proponent is permitted to proceed with this project, it must be ordered to provide a viable plan for construction of a depressed rail line in order to adequately mitigate the adverse effects that the increased intensity of use will have upon the Town of Stoughton.	A depressed rail line is not necessary to address impacts in Stoughton.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.17	Town of Stoughton	<p>The proposal to consider using an electrified rail line through the Town of Stoughton is wholly unacceptable. As acknowledged by the project proponent, the overhead electrical contact system would consist of a network of catenary wires that distribute power from the traction power system to the electric locomotives. The system would have a contact wire and a messenger wire strung above every electrified track in the system with negative feeder wires and static wires and supporting structures to hold the catenary wire in place.</p> <p>The massive support system for the catenary would consist of pole structures with foundations, poles, guys, insulators, brackets, cantilevers, and other assemblies and components. The catenary supports would consist of single track cantilever poles, twin track structures, and multiple track portals.</p> <p>As the project proponent well knows, this massive, ugly, and dangerous infrastructure would split the entire Town of Stoughton in two, both through its already congested downtown area and through open space and residential areas. No city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has ever been victimized by any similar proposal. The project proponent must therefore voluntarily dismiss this alternative or be ordered to do so.</p>	Visual impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.5.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.18	Town of Stoughton	<p>On the issue of adverse effects, it is also important to note that the Stoughton Alternative, both electric and diesel, received a grade of "C" on the category of permanent loss of interior wetlands and received grades of "F" and "D" respectively on the adverse impact upon protected open space. The Stoughton Alternative also received grades of "F" on the category of required property acquisition and received grades of "D" on the category of municipal tax loss.</p> <p>The project proponent must be required to provide adequate mitigation of such further adverse effects, and must also be ordered to provide adequate analysis of proposed mitigation of the adverse effects the project shall have on historic, cultural and religious uses in the vicinity of the rail line, and must be ordered to more fully assess hazardous materials issues related to this project, including two hazardous waste facilities located within steps of the rail line.</p>	<p>At the request of U.S. EPA and others, the letter grade ratings have been eliminated in the FEIS/FEIR, instead only the actual impacts are provided.</p> <p>Commitments to further evaluations of hazardous materials issues are discussed in Chapter 4.12. Mitigation for all resource topics is summarized in Chapter 7.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.19	Town of Stoughton	<p>The potential financial costs of the South Coast Rail Extension to the Town will be extraordinary, requiring that the project proponent reserve funds to ensure adequate mitigation during construction, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•the reimbursement for the cost of experts such as engineers and other professionals in planning for the future infrastructure requirements that will go under the rail line in order to insure that the underground sleeves that will hold the sewer, water, and other infrastructure are of sufficient size, as well as ensuring that there is adequate provision for future surface crossings such as sidewalks;</li> <li>•the reimbursement for the cost of a full time engineer and other specific consultants during the initial planning, design, construction, and post-construction phases of the project to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐review the 25%,50% 75% and final design drawings;</li> <li>☐review the proposed plans for the impact of drainage on abutting properties;</li> <li>☐monitor the construction progress and review any changes;</li> <li>☐act as liaison with the MBTA and contractor and attend meetings with the MBTA, contractor, and community groups;</li> <li>☐review the adequacy and proper protection standards for historic districts and conservation areas;</li> <li>☐review the adequacy and standards for sound mitigation, security fencing and visual screening for residential, commercial, and other properties abutting the rail line; and</li> <li>☐review the adequacy and design standards for the MBTA improvements to the downtown area and reuse of the existing MBTA parking areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Assuming a four-year design to completion timeframe, a reasonably estimated out of pocket cost to the Town of Stoughton would be in the range of \$750,000 for the Project Coordinator/ Engineer and third party consulting engineers and other experts.</p> <p>In addition the Town should be reimbursed for all other costs associated with the project including, but not limited to:</p>	<p>The comment does not pertain to the EIS/EIR. MassDOT will not reimburse the town for the listed items.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•legal costs;</li><li>•land acquisition;</li><li>•infrastructure relocation and replacement;</li><li>•drainage improvements;</li><li>•required streetscape improvements;</li><li>•historic structure related costs;</li><li>•conservation/open space related costs;</li><li>•downtown improvement costs;</li><li>•special security fencing in areas proximate to Public Schools;</li><li>•sound and visual screening in residential and commercial areas abutting the rail line;</li><li>•endangered species protection funds;</li><li>•and other costs which would be identifiable only when the proposed rail right of way plans are available.</li></ul>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.20	Town of Stoughton	<p>As acknowledged by the project proponent, there is existing adequate public and private bus transportation between Boston, Fall River, and New Bedford, with multiple park and ride locations, and there are substantial means of enhancing this existing service with efficient and inexpensive upgrades which will more than fully meet the purported purpose of the project which is to enhance transportation options between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area.</p> <p>The scant and inadequate data it has presented to support the claim that there is a compelling need for enhancement of public transportation between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area, is reflected in the project proponent's claim that "poor connectivity" to metropolitan Boston from the urban areas of New Bedford and Fall River "may constrain" economic activity in the New Bedford/Fall River area. In using the word "may," even the project proponent is unsure of the purported benefits to be gained by the enhancement of transportation options between Boston and the Fall River/New Bedford area, further compelling the conclusion that the foregoing adverse effects of the project proposed by the Stoughton Alternative far outweigh any potential benefit, and that the only reasonable option is the no-build, enhanced bus alternative.</p>	The ridership modeling conducted for the South Coast region indicates an existing and growing demand for the rail alternatives.
L-079.21	Town of Stoughton	Should this project survive further scrutiny, at a minimum, the project proponent must prepare a supplemental DEIS/DEIR which adequately mitigates the adverse effects of its project proposal.	A supplemental EIS/EIR was not required. Additional mitigation information provided in the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.22	Town of Stoughton	<p>In addition to the mitigation analysis set forth above, there is also aging utility infrastructure crossing the railroad tracks at 15 locations along the rail line in Stoughton. If the railroad line is to be reconstructed as proposed, sound engineering practices dictate that this aging infrastructure be replaced, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Central Street</li> <li>2) Simpson Street</li> <li>3) Easement 850' South of Simpson Street</li> <li>4) School Street</li> <li>5) Rose Street Drainage</li> <li>6) Porter Street</li> <li>7) Railroad Station Drainage</li> <li>8) Wyman Street</li> <li>9) Sewer 393' North of Brock Street</li> <li>10) Brock Street</li> <li>11) Drain - 900' South of Brock Street</li> <li>12) Plain Street</li> <li>13) Morton Street</li> <li>14) Easement 900' South of Morton Street</li> <li>15) 240' South of Access Opening to No. 1801 Washington Street</li> </ol>	MassDOT is committed to mitigate impacts that would result from the South Coast Rail project and has made the mitigation commitments provided in Chapter 7 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-079.23	Town of Stoughton	<p>For the foregoing reasons, the Town respectfully requests that the USACE find that the Stoughton Alternative as proposed in the DEIS/DEIR is contrary to the public interest, and that the EOEAA rule that the draft report is inadequate and that a supplemental draft be prepared which either 1) focuses on the no-build (enhanced bus) alternative as the preferred alternative; or 2) which more adequately addresses the adverse impacts of the Stoughton Alternative, along with a fully developed proposed mitigation plan, as outlined herein.</p>	Additional information on mitigation has been developed.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.24	Town of Stoughton	Based on our initial review, the DEIS/DEIR lacks sufficient detail and requires additional information to be provided in a subsequent EIS/EIR filing to properly assess the impacts of the preferred alternative. Below we have provided a detailed review of the transportation study included in the DEIS/DEIR. Several traffic issues have been identified through our review that merit further response from the Proponent. These issues include, but are not limited to, traffic volumes, capacity analysis, parking, existing and new grade crossings, ridership, freight service and railroad bridges.	Thank you for your comment.
L-079.25	Town of Stoughton	<p>In an effort to clearly identify potential impacts within the Town of Stoughton, we have separated the areas shown on attached Figure 4.1.54 (Stoughton Alternatives, Stoughton Line Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 1 of 5) and Figure 4.1.55 (Stoughton Alternatives, Stoughton Line Grade Crossing Locations Sheet 2 of 5) into the following sections and discussed in further detail below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Central Street to Simpson Street.</li> <li>2) School Street to Wyman Street (Downtown Stoughton)</li> <li>3) Brock Street to Easton town line (new crossings)</li> </ol>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.26	Town of Stoughton	<p>Traffic Volumes - Typically, as part of any project, the most recent existing traffic volumes available are used in determining traffic operations and levels-of-service (LOS) on impacted roadways and intersections. The traffic volumes information included on Table 4.1-13d on page 4.1-31 as part of the DEIS/DEIR contains Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) along the roadways within the Town of Stoughton for the years 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2004. These include:</p> <p>Central Street Simpson Street School Street Porter Street Wyman Street Brock Street Plain Street</p> <p>The traffic information contained in the report is outdated and should be supplemented with current data within Stoughton including impacted, at-grade intersections as part of the Stoughton Alternative. We request that additional peak period traffic counts and average daily traffic information be gathered to confirm the volumes presented in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>Existing traffic conditions and impacts that could result from the South Coast Rail project in the vicinity of the existing Stoughton Station were not evaluated as part of the DEIS/DEIR because no changes to parking at this station were proposed at the time. As discussed in Chapter 3 of the FEIS/FEIR, subsequent to the DEIS/DEIR MassDOT has proposed relocating Stoughton Station. The station would be shifted from its present location between Porter and Wyman streets to a new location south of the Wyman Street at-grade crossing. As a result, an inventory of existing transportation conditions and potential impacts was prepared to address the change in the location of the station platform, consolidation of parking and addition of new station driveways; and the increase in the number of parking spaces. Updated data is presented in Chapter 4.1. Specifically, traffic counts for the relocated Stoughton Station were conducted in April 2012.</p>
L-079.27	Town of Stoughton	<p>Further information should be provided by the Proponent clearly showing the proposed mitigation identified above within the limits of Central Street to the Downtown Area, including the School Street, Porter Street and Wyman Street at the grade crossings. As a more detailed assessment of the existing and future crossing operations is completed, additional mitigation measures, such as upgraded crossing treatments or grade separation, should be investigated by the proponent.</p>	<p>Transportation mitigation commitments are provided in Chapter 4.1. A more detailed assessment of existing and future at-grade crossings has been completed.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.28	Town of Stoughton	As stated earlier, the DEIS/DEIR states that Brock Street is considered active and has working signals but is rarely used today. The Proponent states that recommended improvements to mitigate impacts include investigating installation of a traffic signal with pre-emption at Route 138 and Brock Street and geometric reconfiguration of driveways to the east and west to address the delays and queues on Brock Street. We request further information regarding the proposed warrants and schematic layout of the implementation of a traffic signal at this location.	<p>Transportation mitigation commitments are provided in Chapter 4.1. Two measures to mitigate impacts at the Brock St. grade crossing are recommended:</p> <p>1). The proposed traffic signal design plans should consider the effects of incorporating gate operations and restricting movements from Washington Street to Brock Street while the crossing gates are down. This would require changes in geometry along Washington Street to provide a separate northbound left-turn lane and southbound right-turn lane. The existing shoulders on Washington Street may be sufficiently wide to make these changes without the need for land acquisition.</p> <p>2). The traffic signal design plans should modify the existing driveways immediately east of the crossing to discourage motorists from using the parking lot as a way to avoid the traffic signal.</p>
L-079.29	Town of Stoughton	Similar to Brock Street above, the Proponent is proposing further study regarding the installation of a traffic signal at Route 138 and Plain Street intersection to address queues and delays along Plain Street due to the addition of the at-grade crossing. The at-grade crossing at Plain Street is labeled on Figure 4.1-54 as an Existing Grade Crossing to remain although there is no existing crossing at this location. In addition, the existing driveway for the Town Spa Restaurant is located on Plain Street adjacent to Route 138. Any proposed improvements along Plain Street would impact the operations of this business. Therefore, we request the Proponent clarify how this qualifies as an "existing grade crossing" as opposed to a "new grade crossing" at Plain Street. In addition, the Proponent should provide further information regarding the proposed warrants and schematic layout of the traffic signal and show how operations of the adjacent Town Spa driveway would operate in the future.	An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.30	Town of Stoughton	<p>Operations at the Morton Street/Route 138 intersections would be impacted due to the close proximity of the at-grade crossing (see attached picture route138-morton existing.jpg). There is insufficient storage distance for vehicles turning onto Morton Street from Route 138. Private driveways immediately south of Morton Street would also be affected by this situation. Therefore, the Proponent is proposing the closure of Morton Street and the private driveways to the south and proposes constructing a bypass roadway to the private grade-separated crossing on Totham Farm Road.</p> <p>Further details regarding the proposed physical closing of Morton Street and the private driveways to the south will be accomplished and how traffic will traffic will operate using this proposed reconfiguration. In addition, the Proponent should provide details of the bypass roadway proposed to be constructed to the private grade separated crossing on Totham Farm Road.</p>	<p>An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station. On Morton Street, a calculated queue length of 100 feet and an average delay of 33 sections would impact operations at the intersection of Washington Street and Morton Street. The grade crossing would be located approximately 25 feet west of this unsignalized intersection. When the crossing gates are down there would be insufficient storage distance for vehicles turning onto Morton Street from Washington Street. Private driveways immediately south of Morton Street would also experience the same difficulties. Additionally, the steep grade of Morton Street may pose a safety hazard in wet or snowy weather. To mitigate these concerns, Morton Street and the private driveways to the south would be closed and a bypass roadway constructed to the private grade separated crossing on Totham Farm Road. This concept would be further studied in the design phase to evaluate the traffic impacts of these closures and the potential of rerouting traffic to Plain Street. MassDOT would coordinate with the Town of Stoughton during the design process.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.31	Town of Stoughton	<p>Independent field observations were conducted by McMahon during the AM and PM peak periods on Thursday, May 19, 2011 and Friday, May 20, 2011. We observed queuing and delays at several of the at-grade crossings and adjacent intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR within the Town of Stoughton.</p> <p>The following is a summary of our observations:</p> <p>School Street to Wyman Street (Downtown Stoughton) School Street</p> <p>The existing at-grade crossing on School Street is located approximately 200 feet from the Canton Street/School Street unsignalized intersection. During the PM peak hour, queuing was observed on School Street on the approach to Canton Street within this short block to the at-grade crossing. In addition, queuing occurred on the east side of the at-grade crossing during the approximate 1 minute 45 second duration for the train crossing School Street. Any additional trains added as part of the Stoughton Alternative would increase queuing and delays along School Street and may introduce safety concerns at the at-grade crossing that should be addressed by the Proponent.</p>	An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station.
L-079.32	Town of Stoughton	<p>A heavy volume of vehicles along School Street stacked due to the at-grade crossing and the egress of vehicles along Canton Street from the Stoughton Station to the south were observed during the PM Peak hour at the School Street/Canton Street intersection. Based on our experience with traffic operations at MBTA commuter rail stations, there are distinct peaks in entering and exiting traffic associated with each train that stops at a station. The addition of trains and impacted ridership, discussed later in this letter, as part of the Stoughton Alternative could potentially increase the delays at this unsignalized intersection at School Street/Canton Street during the PM peak hour and should be addressed.</p>	An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.33	Town of Stoughton	Existing queuing and delays were observed at the at-grade crossing at Porter Street (Route 27) during the PM Peak hour. The approximate duration for the start to end of the flashing at the at-grade crossing was approximately 1 minute 35 seconds. During the time that the train crosses Porter Street during the PM Peak hour, queuing began and continued on both sides of the at-grade crossing for approximately 10-15 minutes after the trains had passed through Downtown. In addition, there are existing striped crosswalks but no signal control to get pedestrians across Porter Street to the Stoughton Station. The increase in train frequency at the at-grade crossing at Porter Street would add to the heavily traveled block on the west side of the at-grade crossing that current approach School Street as well as between the at-grade crossing and Route 138 signalized intersection and these impacts should be addressed.	An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station.
L-079.34	Town of Stoughton	The impacts of vehicles exiting the Stoughton Station and the release of vehicles queued during the at-grade crossing at Porter Street resulted in observed impacts to the Porter Street/Route 138 signalized intersection as well the intersections within the Downtown Area. The addition of trains and impacted ridership as part of the Stoughton Alternative at the at-grade crossing at Porter Street could potentially increase the delays within the Downtown Area during the PM peak hour and should be addressed by the Proponent.	An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.35	Town of Stoughton	The existing intersections on both approaches to the at-grade crossing at Wyman Street/Morton Street experience minimal queuing during both the AM and PM peak hours. As identified above, a majority of the queuing and delays occur in the Downtown Stoughton area adjacent to the existing station during the peak periods. The increase of the number of trains and train frequency as part of the Stoughton Alternative will reduce the number of gaps between trains and add to the heavily traveled roadways thereby increasing delays for vehicles within the Town of Stoughton. The existing and proposed at-grade crossings require additional traffic operational analysis, including delays and queue lengths, to incorporate current traffic volume information and the increase of service to assess their impacts at the study area intersections should be provided by the Proponent.	An updated analysis is presented in Chapter 4.1 for the relocated Stoughton Station.
L-079.36	Town of Stoughton	The DEIS/DEIR on page 4.1-10 discusses existing and proposed ridership at the existing stations. It states that "since boardings at existing commuter rail stations located near the ends of the existing Providence and Stoughton Commuter Rail Lines are not expected to increase as a consequence of the alternatives, no traffic analyses, beyond the identification of new grade crossing locations, were completed for existing stations or municipalities with existing stations". The logic of the reduction of spaces in the Downtown Area parking and impacts to ridership needs to be fully explained by the Proponent. In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Stoughton Station as part of the Stoughton Alternative. Any information, including a possible origin/destination study of existing vehicles utilizing Stoughton Station should be provided.	Existing traffic conditions and impacts that could result from the South Coast Rail project in the vicinity of the existing Stoughton Station were not evaluated as part of the DEIS/DEIR because no changes to parking at this station were proposed at the time. As discussed in Chapter 3, subsequent to the DEIS/DEIR MassDOT has proposed relocating Stoughton Station. The station would be shifted from its present location between Porter and Wyman streets to a new location south of the Wyman Street at-grade crossing. As a result, an inventory of existing transportation conditions and potential impacts was prepared to address the change in the location of the station platform, consolidation of parking and addition of new station driveways; and the increase in the number of parking spaces (see Chapter 4.1). Detailed information on station-level ridership impacts is provided in Appendix 3.2-H.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.37	Town of Stoughton	It is stated in the DEIS/DEIR on page 3-82 that "the intended goal that the existing commuter rail station designs would be updated". In addition, proposed high-level platforms would be constructed at a height that is 4 feet above the track level, allowing for level-boarding onto all the commuter rail coaches for a 9-car train set (approximately 800' long). The logic of the reduction of spaces in the Downtown Area parking and impacts to ridership needs to be fully explained by the Proponent.	See response to comment L-079.36.
L-079.38	Town of Stoughton	In addition, we request that the Proponent provide information that discusses increased train frequency and the impacts of existing and future ridership projections at the Stoughton Station as part of the Stoughton Alternative. We request the Proponent address if new ridership projections will lead to the possibility of future station consolidations or modifications.	Detailed information on station-level ridership impacts is provided in Appendix 3.2-H. No station consolidations or modifications are reasonably foreseeable.
L-079.39	Town of Stoughton	McMahon conducted an independent study regarding accident data for the study area and at-grade intersections identified in the DEIS/DEIR. Information was obtained from MassDOT for the most recent three-year period available. This data includes complete yearly accident summaries for 2006, 2007, and 2008. The Accident Summary shown below in Table 1 was prepared to identify potential high accident frequencies at the study area intersections. As shown in the table, 36 accidents were reported over the three year period at the grade crossing and Canton Street, 22 accidents at the Route 138 and Brock Street unsignalized intersection, 15 accidents at the Porter Street and Rose Street unsignalized intersection, 12 accidents at the Route 138 and Plain Street, and 10 accidents reported at the Morton Street and Route 138 unsignalized intersection. Although we have collected the accident data, it is unclear when the safety threshold at the study area and at-grade intersections is met or if they exceed the average accident rates. A thorough assessment should be provided by the Proponent to ensure that these locations include adequate safety measures.	Improvements to intersections would be provided where there are project-specific impacts as outlined in Chapter 4.1. Chapter 4.1 includes a crash rate analysis based on 2007-2009 data. Detailed documentation of this analysis is provided in Appendix 4.1-K.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.40	Town of Stoughton	Figure 3.2-40 shows the proposed reconstruction of Stoughton Station due the impacts of the Stoughton Alternative. Recommended mitigation at the Wyman Street/Morton Street/Summer Street intersection includes reconfiguration of the parking lot and driveway. There are also a proposed right turn-in, right-out at the Route 138 and northernmost parking lot access to the south of Wyman Street and a left turn in, left turn out configuration at the Route 138 and southernmost parking lot access. We request the Proponent provide additional information related to the revised parking layouts in the Downtown Area, including parking utilization projections, and existing data and any other relevant data associated with operation of these parking lots and abutting roadways. In addition, any direct and indirect impacts to the reconstructed Stoughton Station due to the reductions of parking should be provided by the Proponent.	See response to comment L-079.36.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.41	Town of Stoughton	<p>According to the DEIS/DEIR, existing train frequency from Canton Junction Station to Stoughton Station, along the existing MBTA Commuter Rail alignment, ranges from 17 roundtrip (34 total trains) passenger trains per day on weekdays to no passenger trains on weekends. There is also freight service several times a week between Canton Junction station and Central Street in Stoughton. Proposed operating plans for the Stoughton Alternative would include three peak periods trains to each of the terminal station of New Bedford and Fall River with a fourth train operating near the peak rush hour period. This equates to approximately one train every forty minutes from Fall River/New Bedford and one every twenty minutes from Taunton northward. During the off-peak periods six additional trains would operate on a three-hour frequency from each of the terminal stations and every ninety minutes from Taunton northward. The DEIS/DEIR states that this translates to nine round trips per weekday operation from each terminal station with one additional round trip from East Taunton for a total of 38 weekday trains per day. However, if each terminal station is served by four peak/shoulder trains and six off-peak trains, along with one round trip to East Taunton, the total would be 42 trains passing through Stoughton. We request the Proponent provide a concise comparison of the number of peak and off-peak trips per each terminal station from Fall River and New Bedford.</p>	<p>Chapter 3, Alternatives, describes the number of train trips that would be associated with the South Coast Rail project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.42	Town of Stoughton	<p>There is existing freight service several times a week between Canton Junction Station and Central Street in Stoughton. As part of the Stoughton alternative, freight service will operate via Canton Junction through Stoughton, proceeding directly via Taunton to New Bedford or Fall River. As stated in the DEIS/DEIR, the only access to the remaining active freight rail customers on the existing Stoughton Branch is via the Northeast Corridor through Canton Junction. The need to access the high-speed corridor will definitely be impacted by the coming of the high-speed train service. The MBTA may or may not grant a freight carrier access to the Canton area through the proposed reconstructed line between Winter Street, Taunton, and the present location of end-of-track in Stoughton. It is stated that daytime freight service on the line segment between Winter Street and Stoughton is possible but not practical. We suggest that any impacts of the freight service along the Stoughton line be clarified and safety impacts addressed. In addition, due to the recent accident of a freight train and MBTA Commuter Rail train in the vicinity of the Canton Junction station, any potential safety concerns between freight and passenger trains needs to be addressed.</p>	<p>South Coast Rail passenger service is independent of any future freight service expansions. Should freight look to expand to areas where it does not currently operate whether in this area or along any other corridors, a separate environmental review and approval process would be required. Freight expansions and their impacts are, therefore, not included in this FEIS/FEIR.</p>
L-079.43	Town of Stoughton	<p>Table 3.2-19 in the DEIS/DEIR provides a list of bridge crossings (both undergrade and overhead) that would require rehabilitation or reconstruction as part of the Stoughton Alternative for the South Coast Rail Project. Additional specific details regarding the rehabilitation or reconstruction at the existing railroad bridges within the Town of Stoughton, including Coal Yard Road and Totman Farm Road, should be provided by the Proponent.</p>	<p>Appendix 3.2-B summarizes all bridge improvements.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-079.44	Town of Stoughton	Figure 3.2-40 shows the proposed reconstruction of Stoughton Station with the implementation of the Stoughton Alternative. Any impacts to the Stoughton Train Station during construction, including hours of construction, dust and noise, temporary busing, and parking impacts should be addressed by the Proponent as well as parking and traffic operation impacts along the abutting local roadways during construction.	Temporary impacts are addressed in throughout the FEIS/FEIR.
L-010.01	Westport Community Schools	I am writing in support of the extension of the rail services into New Bedford and Fall River by way of the electric rail option. As a superintendent of schools in the South Coast (Westport Community Schools is between both Fall River and New Bedford) I have firsthand experience of the impact that the economy has had on our families and communities. The possibility that the rail could extend into the south coast region promises to allow our families and communities easier access to other centers of economic development, such as Boston. The reverse is also true as the rail would make the south coast more accessible to expansion by companies into this region of the commonwealth; thereby increasing the opportunities for economic development.	Comment noted



## **Private Organizations and Businesses**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-046.01	Cedar Shopping Centers, Inc.	<p>My company is the fee owner of both the Kings Plaza Shopping Center and the Fieldstone Marketplace immediately adjacent thereto. I have read through the EIS plan but failed to find the listed documents showing the superimposed view of the newly proposed rail stations as described therein. Specifically there is no attachment detailing what is referenced as 4.5-62A and/or 4.5-62B.</p> <p>Is there a way that those could be forwarded to me via email for our review.</p>	The figures were provided in Volume II of the DEIS/DEIR. Updated figures are provided in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR (Figure 3.2-30 depicts the King's Highway Station site plan).
L-048.01	Citizens Concerned About Tracks	We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR which demonstrates that the Attleboro Route is not only 'Infeasible', but also would result in significantly greater environmental impacts than the other rail options.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
L-048.02	Citizens Concerned About Tracks	'Citizens Concerned About Tracks' continues to support the restoration of commuter rail service from Boston to the cities of Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River which will benefit the South Coast Region.	Thank you for your comment.
L-048.03	Citizens Concerned About Tracks	CCATS concurs with the project proponent (MassDOT) that the Original Stoughton Alternatives (Extension of The Straight Stoughton Route or Corridor) will best meet the Project Purpose. And we remain optimistic the Army Corps will issue a permit (under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act) based on evaluation of the overriding public interest.	Thank you for your comment.
L-048.04	Citizens Concerned About Tracks	We remain adamantly opposed to the Attleboro Alternatives, and are confident that the Final EIS/EIR will eliminate the Attleboro Route from any further consideration for South Coast Rail.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
L-090.01	Citizens Concerned About Tracks	We are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS/EIR which demonstrates that the Attleboro Route is not only 'Infeasible', but also would result in significantly greater environmental impacts than the other rail options.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-090.02	Citizens Concerned About Tracks	'Citizens Concerned About Tracks' continues to support the restoration of commuter rail service from Boston to the cities of Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River which will benefit the South Coast Region.	Thank you for your comment.
L-037.01	Conservation Law Foundation	CLF is pleased that each rail alternative currently under consideration for South Coast Rail includes an electric option. Not surprisingly, the DEIS/DEIR demonstrates that there are very substantial air quality and climate protection benefits associated with electrification of South Coast Rail.	Thank you for your comment.
L-037.02	Conservation Law Foundation	The ultimate benefits of selecting an electric alternative for South Coast Rail, however, would be vastly greater than those identified in the DEIS/DEIR, since such a choice would open up the opportunity for electrification of other commuter rail lines in Massachusetts, particularly those coming into Boston's South Station, including the Fairmount Line. Electrification of the whole commuter rail system serving South Station is possible because its infrastructure has been constructed so that it can be retrofitted for electric trains. The Northeast Corridor ("NEC") is already electrified, and as a result the Providence Line could immediately use electric trains-all that would be needed is additional locomotives. See. e.g., Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Facts and Background Information for FY 2009. p. 4. If one of the electric alternatives is chosen for South Coast Rail it would decrease the costs of investing in electrification on the other lines since some of the upfront costs, such as retraining staff, securing maintenance contracts, and even purchasing vehicles would be reduced. Electrification of South Coast Rail would also make it possible to continue the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail Company's current practice of rotating locomotives between commuter rail lines. As a result, the already positive benefits of electrification of South Coast Rail would be magnified substantially.	Electrification of other existing commuter rail lines is not considered a "reasonably foreseeable" impact of the South Coast Rail project and is therefore outside the scope of this EIS/EIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-037.03	Conservation Law Foundation	<p>Electrification of trains comes with great advantages, particularly here in the Northeast, where the fuel mix powering our regional transmission system is made up, among others, of forty-one percent natural gas, twenty-two percent oil, and less than ten percent coal, and there is an existing policy framework (e.g., the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, state renewable portfolio standards) that provides market incentives for increased renewable power generation. Electric trains achieve faster top speeds and accelerate much more quickly than their diesel counterparts, and they do not require refueling. See, e.g., West Toronto Chapter, Professional Engineers Ontario, Toward a Clean Air Policy: Diesel versus Electric, The Journal of Policy Engagement (Volume 2, No.3, June 2010), p. 20. Electric trains are also more energy efficient because they do not have to carry the weight of the diesel fuel around, which can add thousands of pounds. Id. Regenerative braking also makes electric traction technology much more efficient. When all electric train is accelerating, it uses the motors to drive the train. When it brakes, it uses the motors as a generator to slow the train. The generated power can be pushed back into the system to be used by other trains. Id. Electric engines are also easier and less expensive to maintain, because they have fewer moving parts, while the upkeep of large diesel engines is difficult and requires highly skilled mechanics. Id. at 21. The electric commuter trains are a lot quieter, producing less vibration and have zero mobile source air pollution. Id. at 19.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-037.04	Conservation Law Foundation	As a result of these a technological advantages, electric trains do not contribute to regional and local air pollution, which would help the region reach the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground level ozone and decrease exposure to harmful particulate matter. This has special significance for environmental justice communities, such as those living along the Fairmount Line. Electrification would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the potential, over time, for zero greenhouse gas emissions, with expansion of renewable energy resources in New England. All these environmental benefits would be accompanied by faster, more comfortable, quieter and more reliable service, which attracts greater ridership. More riders in turn translates to a reduction in vehicles miles traveled ("VMT"), yielding additional decreases in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while helping to address congestion on the roads in the region. Electrification of commuter rail at the same time lowers operating costs.	Thank you for your comment.
L-037.05	Conservation Law Foundation	For all the above reasons, CLF strongly urges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to select one of the three electric alternatives proposed in the DEIS/DEIR. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.	Thank you for your comment.
L-077.01	Easton Historical Society	<p>The Easton Historical Society, located at 80 Mechanic Street, North Easton, is an immediate abutter to the proposed South Coast Rail Project. We are hereby providing comments on the recent Draft EIR/EIS report issued by the Army Corp. of Engineers in conjunction with the Massachusetts MEPA Office.</p> <p>The Society is absolutely against the Stoughton Alternative which has been identified by the Commonwealth as the "preferred route" for the South Coast Rail Project. We feel there are inaccuracies in the report, and do not think that the report reflects the true impact on the Society, our building, and the Town of Easton.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-077.02	Easton Historical Society	<p>The Society is housed in the historic 1882 Old Colony Railroad Station. This building, which was designed by H. H. Richardson and landscaped by F. L. Olmsted, sits less than twenty feet from the railroad right of way. We are one of the cornerstones of the North Easton National Register Historic District, the Ames Local Historic District, and we are designated as a National Historic Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. The Society is an integral part in the history and culture of Easton, and acts as the repository for items related to the Town of Easton. These collections include artifacts and papers relating to all areas of the town. Of special note is the collection on the Ames family of Easton and their associated business interests. The Society is a well known resource for historical research on these topics. Researchers, architects and students from across the world come to North Easton to view the five Richardson buildings and Olmsted landscapes. These buildings can be easily seen in the context in which they were originally built, as North Easton is a rare example of an intact industrial village.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
L-077.03	Easton Historical Society	<p>The Society has concerns in several areas. Let us begin by stating that we are being placed in a position to comment without having some significant information available. To date, we have not seen any station design plans for the North Easton Village Station, so it is not possible to comment fully on what may be the most concerning and intrusive part of this project. Asking for comment on an incomplete plan is unrealistic, and we reserve the right to comment when those plans are made public. We do not see how any final comment from us can be issued when critical information like this has not been forthcoming. That being stated, here are our concerns.</p>	<p>A preliminary site plan for the North Easton station was provided in DEIS/DEIR Figure 3.2-36. An updated plan is provided in FEIS/FEIR Figure 3.2-22. Detailed design plans will be prepared subsequent to the completion of the environmental review process.</p> <p>Note that the museum/historic railroad station is located at the Easton Village Station, not the North Easton station.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-077.04	Easton Historical Society	<p>During the construction phase we have concerns about damage to our building from heavy equipment usage in close proximity to the building. We are concerned about the potential weakening of the soil around our foundation as the rail bed is being removed and rebuilt. There is significant concern about vibration from any pile driving that might be done in the immediate vicinity such as the Main Street Bridge reconstruction. After construction we have concerns about the vibration and noise that will arise from the train traffic. This includes the noise of the engines themselves as well as whistle blasts as the train approaches any of several nearby grade crossings. Third, we are also concerned about measures to be taken to safeguard the building in the event of an accident. At this time, it appears that this issue has not been identified or discussed as part of the potential negative effects on this unique cultural resource.</p>	<p>Indirect effects, such as noise and vibration impacts, were considered in Chapter 4.8. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of functioning passenger and/or freight railroads in the past. Available data indicate that the railroad has been rebuilt more than once without measurable permanent harm to this building. Although modern trains are quite different from those that operated in ca. 1882, and may be aesthetically out of character with the existing historic structures there is no reason to believe that modern commuter trains are operationally incompatible with a historic train station.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-077.05	Easton Historical Society	<p>The most significant concern we have is that this project will affect our viability to operate as a history museum. We feel that the proposed stop in the North Easton Village will have a strong negative impact on us and our patrons and visitors. Our property will suffer a decline in its value because of its close proximity to the noise, vibration and fumes from a diesel engine. If an electric train is used, we will suffer a loss of the historic skyline due to the catenaries used to support the overhead electric lines. Historic site lines will be obscured by the train in any case. Also of concern is the proposed use of our parking lot as a “drop and go” area. The Society is not in favor of allowing this use. If we were to give up a major portion of our parking we will lose the ability to have events and meetings here. This will of course negatively impact our ability to be a community resource, and will have a negative impact on our sustaining revenue stream. The Society holds regularly scheduled meetings, and this location has been used as a meeting place by other civic groups as well. Society activities, such as the tours we offer of the surrounding area as well as educational programs we offer for a variety of groups, will be impossible to run without available parking at our facility. Safety is also a major concern as the many walking tours we offer will need to cross tracks. This is especially difficult with groups of children. We will be the only cultural asset that will be so impacted as a result of this project.</p>	<p>The viability of the museum will not be substantially impacted, indeed the new rail access could be useful to attracting visitors that are unable to drive or choose to use public transportation.</p> <p>A small number of kiss-and-ride parking spots (12) would likely be used in the AM and PM peak periods only, the museum's supply of parking would not be substantially changed. No permanent parking would be provided at this station.</p> <p>A safe and gated crossing of the tracks would be provided at Oliver Street, adjacent to the museum.</p>
L-077.06	Easton Historical Society	<p>Furthermore, we feel that the project is wrong for Easton. There are a host of concerns, ranging from the environmental issues, concerns for the close proximity to town water supplies, the large number of grade crossings, bisecting the town and cutting off or increasing emergency vehicle response times, potential unwanted development in historic neighborhoods, the loss of post-Civil War era stonework along the route, the negative impact on several other historic structures, and alterations to historic streetscapes if the electric option is chosen.</p>	<p>The environmental issues raised in the comment were considered in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-077.07	Easton Historical Society	We believe the ridership data used in this study is already becoming obsolete based on population and job loss. We also believe that the ridership figures and environmental impacts do not take into consideration the increased impact of hybrid and alternative fueled vehicles and the increase in the use of technology to work from home.	<p>The ridership forecasts have been updated for the FEIS/FEIR, including the incorporation of 2010 Census data. See Chapter 4.1.</p> <p>Trends such as working from home are considered in the travel demand modeling conducted by CTPS.</p>
L-077.08	Easton Historical Society	The report also does not mention the Little Cedar Swamp, which could be affected by the close proximity of the rail bed, the historic Poole Instrument site on Foundry Street adjacent to the railroad crossing. Among the items manufactured there were mercury thermometers, and the site contains the remains of many such broken mercury vials.	The Little Cedar Swamp is not located near the proposed alignment. A contaminated site at Foundry Street was not identified in the database searches and research conducted for the project and documented in Chapter 4.12.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-045.01	The Fairmount/Indigo Line Coalition	<p>We support the South Coast Rail Project DEIS/DEIR comments submitted by the Conservation Law Foundation on May 27, 2011, advocating in favor of selecting one of the three electric alternatives proposed. Electrification of the South Coast Rail would open up the opportunity for electrification of other commuter rail lines in Massachusetts, including the Fairmount Line. The service area of the Fairmount Line includes some of the most densely populated parts of Boston where residents have the highest poverty levels and greatest dependence on transit. Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan have primarily Latino, Caribbean and African-American neighborhoods, all of which have poverty rates between twenty and twenty five percent, well above the city average of seventeen percent. Those neighborhoods also have among the highest rates of asthma-related hospitalizations for children under five years of age in Boston. These environmental justice communities, as defined by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, have historically been exposed to high levels of air pollution and would greatly benefit from electrification of the commuter rail line and the associated decreases in air pollution. The Fairmount Line does not currently offer full peak service or night and weekend service and therefore would also greatly benefit from the increased service that could be offered on an electrified line due to an increase in ridership.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
E-043.01	Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.	<p>I am writing on behalf of the Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Chamber) to urge that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers endorse MassDOT's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative of LEDPA without further delay. The Chamber also asks that the Corps consult with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office. It is the opinion of the Chamber that the Stoughton route offers the best balance of transportation, economic development and environmental impact of the options under consideration.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-043.02	Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc.	By selecting the Stoughton route, the South Coast Rail project will restore passenger rail transportation from South Station in Boston to the South Coast of Massachusetts. In doing so, it will catalyze nearly half a billion dollars in economic development every year. The cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford are the only cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by commuter rail service. Furthermore, South Coast Rail directly improves the economy in Southeastern Massachusetts, while addressing the long-standing transportation inequity that negatively impacts the future of our region. That is why the time is now to select the Stoughton route.	Thank you for your comment.
L-040.01	Fall River Office of Economic Development	The Fall River Office of Economic Development (FROED) has reviewed the project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report. Upon thorough review, FROED unwaveringly recommends that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers endorse MassDOT's preference of the Stoughton direct route as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative or LEDPA without further delay.	Thank you for your comment.
L-040.02	Fall River Office of Economic Development	FROED also requests that the Corps coordinate with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office to facilitate efficient use of government resources and to expedite the environmental review process, so that the Corps and MEPA may establish a scope of work for the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) that identifies one route – the Stoughton alternative - for further study. This document should address reasonable outstanding issues raised by the public and/or reviewing agencies.	Thank you for your comment.
L-040.03	Fall River Office of Economic Development	The Stoughton direct route offers the best balance of transportation, economic development and environmental impact of the options under consideration as demonstrated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-040.04	Fall River Office of Economic Development	In summary, FROED endorses the Stoughton direct route at the LEDPA as it most clearly meets the project purpose with the least environmental damage. The Stoughton direct route is the fastest option, provides greater air quality and environmental benefits while creating ecological benefits, and provides the greatest potential benefits to the environmental justice populations.	Thank you for your comment.
L-040.50	Fall River Office of Economic Development	FROED anxiously awaits this long overdue connection between regional resources and improved access to economic opportunities. South Coast Rail's unimpeded progress is a crucial component to the economic redevelopment of the South Coast.	Thank you for your comment.
E-010.01	Mass Audubon	On behalf of Mass Audubon, I respectfully request a 60 day extension of the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the South Coast Rail Project. As you know, this is a major public infrastructure project with a large financial cost and potentially serious impacts to fragile ecosystems. The DEIS is a complex and lengthy document and we wish to conduct a thorough review and provide constructive comment to the Army Corps. The May 27 deadline does not allow enough time to evaluate and comment on such an extensive amount of information.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.01	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R does not provide adequate baseline information regarding potentially impacted natural resources, detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts, and a detailed blueprint for implementation of the Corridor Plan to demonstrate that projected benefits of the Plan will materialize.</p> <p>The Scope for the MEPA review required that the DEIR include this information, as the following comments will demonstrate. For this reason we request the USACE and Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) require a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Report (SDEIS/R).</p> <p>Sec. 1502.9(c)(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (draft, final, and supplemental statements) states that agencies may “prepare supplements when the agency determines that the purposes of the Act will be furthered by doing so.”</p>	<p>A supplemental DEIS/DEIR was not required. The DEIS/DEIR contained a vast amount of information on the impacts of the alternatives and mitigation measures, it is not required for every mitigation detail to be determined in the environmental review process. In addition, the mitigation plans have been refined for this FEIS/FEIR.</p>
L-064.02	Mass Audubon	<p>Given the magnitude of impacts of the proposed project, it is vital that the NEPA/MEPA review process thoroughly and adequately describe all impacts, evaluate alternatives and design details to avoid and minimize impacts, and provide a detailed mitigation plan to compensate for unavoidable impacts. The mitigation plan should be specific, identifying particular locations where environmental restoration or replication will be conducted, the preliminary plans for that work, and follow-up monitoring to ensure success. The costs of mitigation are essential elements of the project design and should be provided as part of the project analysis, not merely estimated as part of overall “contingency.” The MEPA Scope required these analyses, but the DEIS/R falls short in several important respects, hence our request for a Supplemental DEIS/R.</p>	<p>The mitigation plans have been refined for this FEIS/FEIR. Overall project mitigation costs have been updated and are included in the cost estimate presented in Table 3.2-22. The cost estimate includes projected environmental resource mitigation costs consistent with the FTA-approved methodology. Comparative costs of mitigation among the alternatives presented in the DEIS/DEIR were not a discriminating factor in our determination that the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives are not practicable. See also the response to Comment No. L-068.37.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.03	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R identifies 66 stream crossings along the Stoughton route. It identifies 12 perennial streams and rivers and states that all of the perennial streams are considered important fisheries habitat. The DEIS/R does not provide information regarding the current condition of existing stream crossings along the Southern Triangle lines although it mentions that some of these cross culverts may need to be replaced. The DEIS/R states in some places that culverts will be upgraded to the extent feasible to meet the stream crossing standards, while in others (e.g. existing freight lines on Southern Triangle) culverts will be replaced in-kind. It is desirable to upgrade culverts to improve passage for fish and wildlife. However, alterations of existing culvert dimensions or replacement of blocked culverts may also alter water flow and hydrology, potentially impacting adjoining wetlands or uplands. This is of particular concern where Atlantic White Cedar Swamps are involved due to sensitivity of this natural community to alterations in hydrology. It is important that all alterations to stream crossings or flows be analyzed and designs submitted that fully document direct and indirect (hydrologic) impacts and proposed mitigation. This information is also needed in order to properly evaluate all potential impacts to conservation lands where the project abuts such properties, since stream crossing work may need a wider corridor than the typical width of the berm or the right-of-way.</p>	<p>An evaluation of existing culverts is provided in Chapter 4.14; specific construction methods and design for each culvert will be determined during preliminary and final design. Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory, provides recommendations for each culvert based on the current, conceptual level of design.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.04	Mass Audubon	The Stoughton route would result in the diversion of a perennial stream that currently runs along the abandoned railroad berm for a distance of ½ mile in the area north of the Raynham Dog Track. Although the DEIS/R claims that relocation of this stream will improve its condition, few details are provided on existing or proposed conditions of the stream. Furthermore, since the location is within the Hockomock Swamp, relocation of the stream may require additional wetlands alteration and/or impacts to abutting Article 97 lands owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG).	The location of the stream was field delineated along with other resource areas along the right of way, and is shown in Figure 4.16-2L. The stream is discussed in Section 4.16.10.3 (under heading Raynham Stream Relocation). Site visits were conducted to determine the characteristics of the stream and the functions and values it provides. The stream is not a natural formation and does not provide any functions or values other than drainage. A preliminary design concept for relocating the stream was presented to the ICG. Based on agency input, relocation of the stream was deemed impractical and the consensus of reviewing agencies was that resources would be better spent elsewhere on other mitigation efforts. The original channel of the stream would be restored in place on the west side of the right-of-way, and the stream would discharge into the wetlands adjacent to mitigation Site B.
L-064.05	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R states on page 4-15-57 that the route would “result in a loss of approximately 32.6 acres within natural areas of five Priority and Estimated Habitat polygons,” while Table 4.15-30 on page 4-15-62 identifies the potential habitat loss as 9.9 acres (see comment below under Impacts to Rare Species). The loss includes areas of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, identified by NHESP as a “Priority Natural Community.” Clarification is needed regarding the full extent of impacts to rare species habitats.	For the updated FEIS/FEIR impact analyses, the Stoughton Electric Alternative impacts are reported by species in Chapter 4.15 and total impacts to rare species habitat are not provided. Totaling impacts across species is, in some cases, double or triple-counting impacts to the same habitat unit. Impacts need to be considered on an individual species basis.
L-064.06	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R states that forty certified or potential vernal pools were identified within 100 feet of the right-of-way of the Stoughton alternative. This route would result in loss of 1.77 acres of vernal pool and 55.04 acres of supporting upland adjacent to vernal pools. Additional vernal pools may exist along the Southern Triangle freight lines but are not identified in the DEIS/R.	As described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area. Chapter 4.14 includes measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to vernal pools.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.07	Mass Audubon	It is important that all direct and indirect impacts of the project on protected conservation lands be fully documented in the NEPA/MEPA review. This includes any potential impacts from replacement or repair of stream crossings, any hydrologic alterations on abutting wetlands, and relocation of the stream presently occupying ½ mile of the rail corridor in the Hockomock.	All new bridges or replaced culverts will be designed to meet the Stream Crossing Standards where such design is not constrained by engineering requirements. Hydraulic analysis is recommended at culvert locations where hydrological changes could result from replacement, as itemized in Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory. MassDOT will undertake an analysis of the stream occupying the rail corridor during preliminary and final design to avoid or minimize impacts from relocating the stream, or mitigate for unavoidable impacts.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.08	Mass Audubon	<p>We also focus our comments on the extent to which the DEIS/R demonstrates compliance with key environmental laws, particularly the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWPA), the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and the state and federal Clean Water Acts (CWA).</p> <p>The Guidelines to Implement Section 404(b)(1) of the US Clean Water Act (CFR 40 Section 230) prohibit the discharge of dredge or fill material if there is a practicable alternative that would have less adverse environmental impact on the aquatic ecosystem, and if the discharge would cause or contribute to significant degradation of the waters of the United States.</p> <p>Under the MWPA, variances (310 CMR 10.05(10)) from the performance standards may only be granted if the project fulfills an overriding public interest, there are no reasonable conditions or alternatives that would allow the project to proceed in compliance, and mitigating measures are proposed that will allow the project to be conditioned so as to contribute to the protection of the interests of the Act.</p> <p>Because the Stoughton alternative would result in alteration of more than 5,000 square feet of Bordering Vegetated Wetland, construction of this alternative would require a variance from the MWPA. Because it would result in discharge of fill into a vernal pool it would also require a variance under the 401 Water Quality Certification requirements (314 CMR 9.00).</p> <p>The MESA regulations (321 CMR 10.23) also require an alternatives analysis and demonstration that impacts to rare species have been avoided and minimized. In addition, the proponent must demonstrate that mitigation is provided that will result in a long-term Net Benefit to the affected state-listed species.</p> <p>It is vital that the NEPA/MEPA review for the project include</p>	Chapter 8 of the FEIS/FEIR provides a summary of regulatory compliance with applicable laws.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		sufficient information to fully document impacts to areas regulated under these laws, demonstrating that impacts have been avoided and minimized as much as possible, and that effective plans for mitigation will be implemented. This is an essential part of the environmental review process and should not be left outstanding until permitting. In particular, it should be noted that the MESA permit process does not include any opportunity for public review and input, therefore review of rare species impacts and mitigation through NEPA/MEPA is especially important.	
L-064.09	Mass Audubon	<p>The potential impacts of climate change elevate the importance of protecting and preserving the current landscape of wetlands to the extent feasible. For example, more intense storms predicted under current global change models will require expanded flood storage areas and increase the need for buffer areas to protect private property. Undeveloped corridors including free-flowing waterways that provide opportunity for shifting and migration of natural communities and wildlife populations may be essential in response to temperature change and shifts of wetlands and other habitats. These concerns underscore the need to avoid wetlands loss to the greatest extent practicable.</p> <p>The integrity of the Hockomock Swamp as a single intact block of wildlife habitat is a key element of its functionality. Large intact habitats are increasingly important as they are more resilient to environmental stresses like those associated with climate change. The ability of plants and animals to move unimpeded throughout such areas, and to be free of noise, pollution and other disturbances are important aspects of the functionality of the area. Impacts of placement of a rail line through such an area are not limited to the project footprint (as demonstrated by the CAPS analysis). The full extent of these impacts and alternatives to avoid or minimize fragmentation effects should be evaluated carefully.</p>	Impacts on wetlands and wildlife habitat (including indirect or secondary impacts) were considered in the EIS/EIR. Impacts were minimized where practicable and mitigation measures developed for unavoidable impacts.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.10	Mass Audubon	<p>Project impacts in relation to protected lands and resources: The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate baseline information regarding important resources and impacts to those resources by the project, especially in the Southern Triangle portion of the rail corridor. In addition to Mass Audubon's land, the Southern Triangle lines also run through other sensitive areas including public conservation lands owned by DCR in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp (an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a National Natural Landmark). Details of all work where existing rail berms cross or abut protected conservation lands should be presented and the impacts evaluated and mitigated.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.10, Open Space, describes potential impacts to the specific open space locations along the South Coast Rail alignment. This includes potential impacts to Article 97 lands and other open spaces resulting from the updated design and mitigation measures for the impacted land. The project would not impact DCR property in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp. Chapter 4.16, Wetlands, describes wetland delineation procedures and how wetland impacts were calculated in reference to the current level of design. Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, describes the current and proposed conditions for each of the culverts that convey water and bridges that cross waterbodies (also see Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory for additional details).</p>
L-064.11	Mass Audubon	<p>The Scope for the DEIS/R requires information on the number and location of stream crossings associated with each alternative (p. 27). During a site visit to the portion of the rail line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp on November 16, 2011 conducted by three Mass Audubon staff members, the South Coast Rail Project Director and other project staff, several culverts and streams that flowed along the right-of-way (ROW) were observed that are not identified in the DEIS/R. Although the Southern Triangle involves refurbishment and improvement of existing freight lines rather than entirely new construction as in the other portions of the project, it is nonetheless important to document resources and impacts along this portion of the route. In particular, it is important that the boundary between existing rail berms and wetlands be defined in relation to actual plans for the rail upgrading work so that impacts can be properly estimated, and that the condition of culverts and bridges where water flows under the berm be documented to identify where these structures would need to be replaced. In this section of our comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), we requested that the proponent complete a survey of all streams and culverts along the ROW. We reiterate that request.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.16, Wetlands, describes wetland delineation procedures and how wetland impacts were calculated in reference to the current level of design. Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, describes the current and proposed conditions for each of the culverts that convey water and bridges that cross waterbodies (also see Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory for additional details).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.12	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R should also provide construction details of all stream crossings where work is proposed to allow full evaluation of potential impacts. This includes assessment of existing hydrology and condition of culverts, evaluation of whether crossings can be upgraded to better conform to stream crossing standards without adversely impacting hydrology of the swamp, and the full footprint of all proposed work.	Chapter 4.14 describes the bridges and culverts within the rail right-of-way. Each bridge will be replaced and each culvert will be evaluated for replacement for engineering purposes. All structures that would be replaced will be evaluated to determine if meeting Stream Crossing Standards can be accomplished within the engineering constraints of a high-speed rail line as well as, where appropriate, not altering the hydrology of adjacent wetlands. Recommendations for each culvert are provided in Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory; engineering and hydraulic analyses will be conducted during preliminary and final design.
L-064.13	Mass Audubon	Rare species and vernal pool surveys: The MEPA Scope required that “the DEIR should include an endangered species impact analysis based on adequate species survey and habitat assessment for each alternative based on consultations with NHESP...” It also called for consultations with NHESP, Mass Audubon, and other impacted conservation landowners in determining which areas should be field surveyed for wetlands and rare species (p. 24). Our comments on the ENF for this project stated: “Mass Audubon reiterates requests it has made previously on this project that additional on-site rare species investigations be conducted in the Assonet Cedar Swamp, with opportunity for Mass Audubon and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to provide specific recommendations on the study protocols.” To the best of our knowledge, no rare species surveys were conducted in sensitive areas along the existing New Bedford and Fall River ROWs, including the Assonet and Acushnet Cedar Swamps; nor can we find any record of consultation with NHESP or conservation landowners in the DEIR.	As described in Chapter 4.15, NHESP has determined that such studies were not required at this stage of project development.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.14	Mass Audubon	<p>The MEPA Scope also required that the DEIR “identify potential vernal pools, initially using maps and aerial photography and then verify in the field...” It stated that “Potential vernal pool identification and certification should be conducted for areas within the right-of-way of the rail alignment and within a reasonable distance of the ROW...The DEIR should include the result of vernal pool investigations, including a description and mapping of those meeting the criteria for certification” (p. 26). It appears that no new vernal pool investigation was conducted for the Southern Triangle. Table 4.14-5, “Vernal Pools Within 100 Feet of South Coast Rail Alternatives” lists no vernal pools on the New Bedford line in the Assonet or Acushnet Cedar Swamps. At least one and possibly two potential vernal pools were observed on the portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp during the above-referenced site visit.</p>	<p>As described in Chapter 4.16, wetlands, all wetland resource areas along the portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp have been identified and any impacts have been calculated. Any of these areas that have any additional vernal pool functions will be identified in the final design phase of the project. Vernal pools identified during 2011-2012 field work with Conservation Commissions were added to the inventory described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.15	Mass Audubon	Impacts to wetlands: As noted above, the DEIS/R states that the Stoughton route will result in loss of 11.86 acres of wetlands, including areas of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp along the Fall River Secondary line in Lakeville and in the Hockomock Swamp. Our comments on the ENF requested that the DEIS/R include project plans of a 1"=40' scale for areas abutting wetlands that include delineation of all resource area boundaries, streams and the location and footprint of all work, as well as cross section diagrams of pre- and post-construction dimensions of the right-of-way (showing any modifications to side slopes) and of culverts. The plans should also include wetland boundaries that have been field-delineated and approved by the local conservation commission. This information was not provided in the DEIS/R. While the exact scale of plans to be provided may be determined by EEA and the USACOE differently than our recommendation, the DEIS/R does not provide key information necessary to verify whether the actual wetlands alterations have been accurately projected. Significant areas of impact may be overlooked in the absence of field delineations of wetlands, documentation of existing locations and conditions of cross culverts, and other essential details.	Information on updates to wetland delineations are provided in Chapter 4.16. The delineation of the wetland resource areas was reviewed by the USACE. In 2011, ANRADs were submitted to all ten municipalities through which the South Coast Rail project passes. In each municipality, the filing was reviewed by the Conservation Commission through a public hearing process. Several municipalities retained outside consultants to review the delineation. All ANRAD submissions were also submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) for state review.
L-064.16	Mass Audubon	Wetland areas abutting actual work may be altered by changes in light, temperature, pH and other factors that result from clearing of existing canopy. The SDEIS/R should provide an estimate of the amount of wetlands likely to be altered by indirect impacts.	Additional analysis of secondary (indirect) impacts to wetlands in presented in Chapter 4.16 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-064.17	Mass Audubon	Our comments on the ENF requested that the DEIS/R provide soil analysis for the Hockomock portion of the right-of-way to demonstrate the ability to support the footings of the trestle. If the project were to encounter difficulties with installation of the proposed trestle during construction, redesign or modification of plans could well result in additional alteration of wetland resources.	A subsurface exploration program was conducted in February 2012 for the purposes of providing preliminary geotechnical recommendations for the trestle structure and information is provided in that document. The trestle design is discussed in detail in the Trestle Design and Construction section of the South Coast Rail Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.18	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R does not provide separate estimates of wetlands loss for the diesel and electric options. We request verification that the acreage of wetlands loss identified includes areas that may be cleared or filled to construct electric substations and catenary supports for line electrification.	As discussed in Chapter 4.16, the Stoughton Diesel Alternative does not require traction power substations and would result in approximately 0.01 acre of permanent wetland impacts less than the Stoughton Electric Alternative along the New Bedford Main Line. All other impacts are the same as those estimated for the remainder of Stoughton Electric Alternative. Similarly, the Whittenton Diesel Alternative has 0.01 acres less permanent impact to wetlands than the Whittenton Electric Alternative.
L-064.19	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R indicates that the proposed Stoughton line will consist of single track through sensitive areas including the Hockomock, Pine, Assonet Cedar and Acushnet Cedar Swamps. We commend this decision as a means to reduce impacts to wetlands, vernal pools and rare species habitat. However, it is important to know whether potential operational, maintenance, and safety issues associated with the use of single track in these areas have been factored in. Information is needed as to whether or not single tracking in these areas has been fully considered in the calculation of travel time. If actual travel times exceed the projected ones, the result may be a demand for double-tracking of these areas in the future. Verification that projected travel times adequately reflect future operation with single tracks should be provided in an SDEIS/R.	Travel time was calculated using a refined design that maximized travel speed along the corridor. Single and double track sections are shown in Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.20	Mass Audubon	<p>We also request clarification regarding how maintenance and emergency access to rail lines through sensitive areas will be provided, including on the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp. The DEIS/R identifies “not constructing maintenance roads along the rail corridors” as a potential measure to reduce impacts to wetlands and rare species habitat. We commend this effort, but request that the proponent describe how the absence of maintenance and emergency access roads in certain areas would impact future train operations. While service vehicles can run on tracks, analysis is needed as to how that would be accomplished without interfering with train schedules. If lack of access for maintenance or emergencies becomes an issue, access roads and/or sidings may be constructed in the future, possibly resulting in significantly increased impacts. Measures (i.e., single tracking without separate service access) that are not likely to be viable over the long term should not be counted as impact avoidance when evaluating the total impacts of specific alternatives.</p>	<p>As described in the Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C), access for operations and maintenance would be from the trestle structure. In addition, the Construction Staging Technical Report (Appendix 3.2-F) summarizes phasing in order to maintain access throughout the corridor. No wetland fill is required for access roads in any location.</p>
L-064.21	Mass Audubon	<p>As noted above, the Stoughton route would result in the diversion of a perennial stream that currently runs along the abandoned railroad berm for a distance of ½ mile in the area north of the Raynham Dog Track. The DEIS/R states on p. 4-16-81, “It is presumed that this stream would be re-routed to its original and restored/stabilized channel, and hence this relocation to and restoration of the original stream channel would be a beneficial impact.” The DEIS/R does not describe how the location of the original channel would be determined or where it is located. Plans for the proposed relocation should be provided in a SDEIS/R. Stream relocations usually involve creation of meandering channels, as opposed to a ditch alongside the rail line. The SDEIS/R should clarify whether the relocated channel will involve alteration of existing wetlands within the Hockomock Swamp and if it will be located outside of the ROW. If the relocation falls outside of the ROW on abutting land owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG), it would qualify as an Article 97 impact.</p>	<p>See response to comment L-064.04.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.22	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states on p. 4-16-34, “Blocked culverts and drainage ditches along the right-of-way have formed three wetlands within the railbed. These wetlands (ST-6, ST-7, and ST-7A) are located within 15 feet north and south of the Stoughton Fish and Game Club access road.” A SDEIS/R should clarify whether impacts to these wetlands from reconstruction of the railbed have been included in the calculation of wetlands alteration.</p>	<p>Appendix 4.14-A provides an inventory of all culverts within the ROW that cross under the railbed. The culverts near the Stoughton Fish and Game Club Access Road are CV-ST 5.76 and CV-ST 5.82. MassDOT proposes that these culverts be replaced in-kind (e.g., the new culverts do not need to meet Stream Crossing Standards because the structures do not connect areas of high biological value).</p> <p>Culvert replacement recommendations included consideration of wetland impacts, depending in part upon the habitat value of the wetlands on either side of the railroad and the connectivity function of the culvert.</p>
L-064.23	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R further states that several of the species may use habitat types that were not included in the assumptions used in the DEIS/R and that the assumptions serve as “a general guide to coarsely estimating the level of impact.” The actual amount of habitat impacted is proposed to be determined based on field delineation after the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative is selected.</p> <p>A coarse estimate of the level of impact to rare species habitat may not be an adequate basis for an accurate determination of which alternative is the “least environmentally damaging.” The SDEIS/R should provide acreage of impacts to rare species habitat that is based on field delineation.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.15 identifies the long- and short-term impacts to state listed species and habitats. Tables in this chapter provide information on the acreage of habitat loss associated with each of the state-listed species potentially affected by the alternatives. NHESP has determined that additional field studies were not required at this stage of project development. USACE concluded the level of detail regarding endangered species habitat impact was sufficient to identify the LEDPA.</p>
L-064.24	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R characterizes most of this nesting habitat as “of marginal quality,” It states (p. 4-15-31) that the abandoned rail embankment in the Stoughton route was evaluated under two scenarios: one assuming that the railbed provided habitat for Blanding’s Turtle, Eastern Box Turtle and Blue-spotted Salamander and the other assuming that the railed does not provide habitat. The proponent should look for evidence of turtle nesting to determine whether or not the railed provides this habitat and present the conclusions in the SDEIS/R.</p>	<p>Based on prior studies described in Chapter 4.15, the railroad embankment through the Hockomock Swamp provides limited nesting habitat due to the dense gravel substrate and shaded light regime. Although turtles are occasionally observed to nest on the embankment, the open sandy soils under the powerline and along the powerline roadway are preferred nesting sites based on field observations of nesting turtles and predated nests.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.25	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states that loss of migratory routes and increase in habitat fragmentation would result “because construction of this (the Stoughton) track would occur within undeveloped forested area.” The project proposes to partially mitigate this impact by construction of an 8,500 foot trestle. We commend this proposal and as noted above, request that the feasibility and cost of construction be ascertained. The DEIS/R indicates that in areas north and south of the proposed trestle, the total barrier effect would be approximately 19,500 feet, including 9,700 feet used by Blanding’s Turtle, 1,400 feet used by Blue-spotted Salamander and 8,400 feet used by Eastern Box Turtle. Disruption of migratory routes can have potentially significant impacts to the survival of rare species. A survey conducted in the Hockomock Swamp in 2008 and 2009 (referenced in the DEIS/R) found that a female Blanding’s Turtle traveled a total of three miles in one year and in 2009 returned to the site used for nesting in 2008. The DEIS/R also acknowledges that some organisms that use vernal pools for breeding return to the same pool year after year and do not seek other pools if the migratory path is blocked.</p>	<p>The South Coast Rail Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C) summarizes the concepts evaluated for constructing a trestle structure through the Hockomock Swamp between Foundry Street (MP 11.8) in Easton, MA and Race track Crossing (MP 14.10) in Raynham, MA. The Memorandum also discusses the feasibility and cost of construction of the proposed trestle.</p>
L-064.26	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states that there would be a potential increase in mortality of rare species near streams and wetlands, such as Mocha Emerald and Hessel’s Hairstreak caused by the use of herbicides, but says that these impacts would be reduced by adherence to an approved Vegetation Management Plan restricting the use of herbicides in these areas. The SDEIS/R should include a clear commitment to such a restriction and provide maps that show the location of “no-spray” zones for each alternative.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 of the FEIS/FEIR (page 4.14-81) describes the Vegetation Management Plan, which was also included in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.27	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states at several points that the Stoughton alternative will result in improvement to migration for terrestrial wildlife because “reconstructing these tracks presents opportunities to reconstruct existing culverts or bridges to improve wildlife passage.” Analysis of these opportunities will occur “during final design.” Without specific information about the number and specific location of culverts and bridges to be reconstructed, it is impossible to evaluate the amount of improvement that will occur. Changes in these crossings need to be carefully designed so as not to adversely alter the hydrology of the cedar swamp. The SDEIS/R should provide this analysis.</p>	<p>Wildlife crossings at culvert and bridge locations will be designed in accordance with the Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards, as described in the Chapter 4.14 and specifically identified in Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory. Additional wildlife crossings, consisting of tunnels and between-tie structures, will be sited at the locations identified in the Chapter 4.14 figures in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR. Wildlife passage will also be facilitated by the 8,500-foot long trestle over the Hockomock Swamp.</p>
L-064.28	Mass Audubon	<p>Table 4-15-30 (“Direct and Indirect Effects to Rare Species from the South Coast Rail Alternatives”) provides NHESP’s scores for barrier impacts and overall loss of habitat functions. The Stoughton route received a score of 6 for barrier impacts, compared to scores of 1.5 for the Attleboro route and 0 for Rapid Bus, and a score of 10.5 for loss of habitat functions, compared to scores of 7.5 for Attleboro and 3 for Rapid Bus (page 4.15.62). The DEIS/R states on page 4-15-31 that NHESP noted that the ranking of alternatives by assigning qualitative impact ratings is more important than the calculated acreage of impacts. Especially considering the higher scores assigned to the Stoughton route, we request that the SDEIS/R provide a more detailed overall examination of specific impacts to state-listed species and habitat as specifically requested above.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.15 identifies the long- and short-term impacts to state listed species and habitats.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.29	Mass Audubon	<p>Indirect impacts/impacts to biodiversity. The DEIS/R acknowledges that the rail line south of Stoughton Station “has been abandoned for several decades with the tracks and ties removed in most places and vegetation covering much of the embankment.” It also states that “existing blocks of contiguous habitat would be fragmented and edge effects would be introduced” as a result of clearing of the canopy along the ROW that would be needed to re-establish train service along the corridor (p. 4-16-82). The DEIS/R identifies in Chapter 4-14 general impacts to biodiversity that may result from fragmentation and “edge effects,” including spread of invasive species, decrease in species dependent on core and/or undisturbed habitat, impacts of noise and predation and impacts of changes in light, temperature, chemical composition, hydrology or other factors on vegetation and aquatic ecosystems.</p> <p>The indirect impacts of the Stoughton route are evaluated on pages 4-14-83 ff. This section generally dismisses the significance of these impacts. One reason cited is the limited width of the canopy gap, identified here as “40’”. We note that other sections of the DEIS/R refer to the canopy gap through the Hockomock Swamp as “40 to 80’”. The SDEIS/R should clarify how wide the canopy gap will be; if the gap may be as large as 80’, the SDEIS/R should evaluate the impacts that would potentially result.</p>	<p>Indirect effects to biodiversity are addressed in Chapter 4.14. The comment does not identify any specific deficiency of the analysis.</p> <p>Reconstructing the railroad track system through the Hockomock Swamp will increase the width of the canopy gap over the railed to 30 feet wide in areas with single track.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.30	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states on p. 4-14-85, “Although the Stoughton Alternative would increase the canopy gap and create a partial barrier to vertebrate movement, the Hockomock Swamp would continue to provide moderate to large-sized forest blocks.” The fact that some unfragmented forest blocks would remain does not mean that significant loss of ecological function and value would not occur. That loss was assessed through application of the University of Massachusetts’ CAPS model. This model measures the loss of ecological integrity and biodiversity that would result from each alternative. Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to support plants and animals and the natural processes necessary to sustain them over the long term. The CAPS model establishes a grid over the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and calculates the “index of ecological integrity” for each cell of the grid based on eight different ecological factors.</p> <p>In contrast to the DEIS/R’s characterization of the indirect impacts of the Stoughton route as “minimal,” the CAPS analysis presented a different conclusion, indicating that the Stoughton alternative would result in a major loss of ecological integrity. This loss would be 456.9 units, compared to 324.8 units for the Attleboro alternative and zero for Rapid Bus. The CAPS analysis attributes a large portion of this loss to “indirect impacts.” The map in the CAPS analysis illustrates that fragmentation impacts would extend far into the Hockomock Swamp.</p> <p>Regarding impacts to the Pine Swamp, the DEIS/R states, “Reconstructing the rail could create a barrier to the movement of vernal pool organisms between pools or between breeding and non-breeding habitat;” also that “Reconstructing the track would require vegetation removal which could alter the microclimate of vernal pools close to the track” (p. 4.14-87).</p> <p>The conclusions of the CAPS analysis are relevant to the</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 includes discussion of the CAPS analysis. As discussed in Section 4.14.3.4, subsection entitled Relevance of the CAPS Model to Mitigation, the CAPS analysis is relatively coarse-grained and is not an appropriate tool to evaluate the proposed mitigation measures for impacts to aquatic ecosystems.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		determination of the project’s potential adverse environmental impacts to aquatic ecosystems, selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Preferred Alternative, and mitigation that should be required if the Stoughton alternative is selected. We request that the conclusions of this analysis be examined in more detail in a SDEIS/R.	
L-064.31	Mass Audubon	<p>Potential “taking” of open space land protected by federal, state or municipal governments (“Section 4F taking”): 49 USC 303 prohibits use of federal funds to take land from federal, state or local parks and similar public open space, unless there is no feasible alternative and adequate mitigation is provided. As noted above, the rail right-of-way for the Stoughton route passes through the Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area, the Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation and the Pine Swamp, areas that fall under state or municipal ownership and are protected by Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The DEIS/R fails to identify the width of the ROW in these areas and provides no diagrams or other information to demonstrate that reconstruction of the rail lines can be confined within the ROW. It is our understanding that the ROW through the Hockomock Swamp is 60’ wide, but the DEIS/R indicates that the canopy opening may be up to 80’ wide. Clarification is needed about whether all work will fall within the ROW. We request that this information be provided in a SDEIS/R.</p>	<p>The alternatives under consideration in this FEIS/FEIR do not require approvals from U.S. DOT, therefore Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act does not apply. Article 97 requirements are addressed in Chapter 4.10, Open Space.</p> <p>Reconstructing the railroad track system through the Hockomock Swamp will increase the width of the canopy gap over the railbed to 30 feet wide in areas with single track, not 80 feet wide. Construction could be completed largely within existing ROW, property acquisition requirements are provided in the figures accompanying Chapter 4.2, Land Use.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.32	Mass Audubon	<p>Induced growth: The DEIS/R also identifies projected impacts of induced growth and development from the project, compared to the “no build” scenario. Examples of the projected impacts are: increased vehicle miles traveled (VMTs); increases in greenhouse gas emissions related to new dispersed development; and loss of forest and farmland. The Stoughton Alternative would add 75,422 VMTs per day and 20,750 tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions, and would increase loss of forestland by 575 acres and loss of farmland by 313 acres over the “no-build” alternative. The DEIS/R acknowledges the likelihood that loss of forest land would also result in loss of carbon sequestration, but does not quantify additional greenhouse gas emissions increases that would result as it should. The Massachusetts’ 2010 Statewide Forest Resource Assessment used a study by Pregitzer and Euskichen (2004) to estimate carbon sequestration at 0.85 tons per year for forests aged 71-120 years. Using that figure, loss of 575 acres of forestland caused by induced growth associated with the Stoughton route would reduce carbon sequestration by approximately 488 tons per year, plus the conversion losses of stored carbon when forest is removed. A SDEIS/R should acknowledge this.</p>	<p>Various studies have attempted to quantify the role of forests in helping to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, but the analysis is complex and depends on multiple variables, many of which are poorly understood. The carbon sequestration capacity of individual tree species, the age of forests, the volume of trees cut down, and soil disturbance are a few examples of multiple factors that would affect carbon emissions in a certain area. Because it is very complex and not well understood, quantitative analysis of carbon sequestration was not undertaken for the South Coast Rail alternatives.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.33	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states that these impacts would be reduced by implementation of the Corridor Plan and evaluates the degree of mitigation provided by “high” and “low” implementation scenarios.</p> <p>Mass Audubon supports vigorous implementation of the Corridor Plan to achieve the goals identified in the DEIS/R of reducing land conversion, travel and VMTs, greenhouse gas emissions, water use and other factors. We are concerned that the DEIS/R fails to provide a detailed blueprint for that implementation to ensure that impacts of induced growth will in fact be offset, and other projected benefits will be provided. The DEIS/R states on page 5-70 that the SCR project with implementation of smart growth measures would “have a beneficial impact of unknown magnitude” on protected open space; Table 5-24 also describes the incremental change in protected open space from the no-build scenario as “unknown.” We request that a detailed implementation plan be developed and included in an SDEIS/R which includes a demonstrated financial commitment to the needed state, regional and local planning and land use regulatory reforms that will be needed to fully implement the Corridor Plan.</p>	A detailed implementation plan for the Corridor Plan is presented in Section 5.5.
L-064.34	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R states on page 5-57 that the Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) in the SCR Corridor Plan represent 139,758 acres in the South Coast communities. We request clarification of how much of that acreage is already under permanent protection and therefore would not represent an opportunity to increase future protection of open space. For example, the PPAs of Fall River and Freetown include the 13,800-acre Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, currently protected. Lakeville’s PPA includes Mass Audubon’s 954-acre Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary, New Bedford’s PPA includes the Acushnet Cedar and the PPAs for Easton, Raynham and Taunton include portions of the Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management area, also currently protected.</p>	<p>The Corridor Plan did not identify how much of the PPAs (which in some cases extend over thousands of acres and include protected lands) are currently protected open space. The 2012 Three-Year Retrospective Report on Corridor Plan implementation states that \$63.1 million of state investment was directed to PPAs between FY2009 and FY2011. The number of acres protected are not included in this report. The report is available at <a href="http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/RetrospectiveRptMay2012.pdf">www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/RetrospectiveRptMay2012.pdf</a>.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.35	Mass Audubon	<p>The MEPA Certificate on the ENF required detailed plans for mitigation of impacts to wetlands, rare species and biodiversity, as follows:</p> <p>Wetlands (page 27 of MEPA Certificate): The DEIR should include a detailed description of measures to avoid and minimize wetland impacts for each of the alternatives. The DEIR should also include a comprehensive mitigation plan for any unavoidable impacts, explain why these impacts are unavoidable, and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent feasible. The mitigation plan should address permanent and temporary impacts and construction-related impacts...The DEIR should describe proposed wetlands mitigation areas and identify locations on maps and site plans. As noted in the MassDEP comment letter, there is flexibility within the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. The DEIR should describe how mitigation sites will be designed to preserve critical functions such as flood storage volume at each locality. The DEIR should discuss ownership of the sites and identify any proposed to be taken by eminent domain. The DEIR should provide details on any replication proposed including the timeframe anticipated and the methods proposed to achieve successful replication. The DEIR should include a monitoring and contingency plan to ensure success of mitigation.</p> <p>Rare species (page 24): The DEIR should include a detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for each alternative.</p> <p>Biodiversity (page 29): The DEIR should describe measures proposed to avoid and minimize impacts, and include a detailed mitigation plan to address biodiversity impacts. The plan should include an estimate of mitigation costs such as funding for land acquisition, ecological assessment and monitoring programs, wildlife crossings, and other biodiversity conservation efforts. The DEIR should describe in</p>	<p>Locality-specific information for each of the wetland establishment sites is provided in Chapter 4.16. Figures of existing conditions as well as proposed mitigation design concepts are provided in Figures 4.16-6 through 4.16-19. Additional information on mitigation for rare species and biodiversity impacts is provided in Chapters 4.15 and 4.14, respectively. The public will have the opportunity to review this information in this FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>quantitative and qualitative terms the extent to which the mitigation proposed will support biodiversity conservation and reduce or compensate for project-related impacts.</p> <p>Despite these specific requirements and the significance of the projected impacts, the DEIS/R fails to provide detailed mitigation plans to replace lost resources and their functions and values and states that the mitigation plan will be prepared at a later date. Without the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory standards of the MWPA, MESA and the state and federal CWA. For these reasons, we request that you require preparation of a Supplemental DEIS/R.</p>	
L-064.36	Mass Audubon	<p>Our comments on the ENF requested “a review of available information to identify possible candidate areas for restoration of previously filled or destroyed wetland areas within the project corridor” including “current and historic aerial photography, USGS and other maps as well as the historical written records and maps of local and regional agencies documenting local wetlands.” As an example, we cited the Raynham Dog Track site where significant segments of the existing parking lot may well be paved-over former wetlands. We urged that preference should be given to mitigation projects that remove fill or pavement to restore historic wetlands over creation of wetlands in upland. We reiterate these comments, and urge their consideration in an SDEIS/R.</p>	<p>Aerial photographs and site visits were used to determine two likely areas of development in wetlands. Portions of both Site B and Site E appear to have been originally constructed in wetlands. Wetland establishment and restoration is proposed for both sites and is discussed in Chapter 4.16. Exact amounts of original wetlands are not known at either site.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.37	Mass Audubon	<p>In some cases, projected impacts may be difficult to mitigate. For example, attempts to replicate or restore Atlantic White Cedar Swamp have yielded mixed results in the past, and remains subject to scientific uncertainty. Our comments on the ENF referred to the historical transformation of the portions of Atlantic White Cedar Swamps to red maple in the Hockomock and Assonet Cedar Swamps, noting the hydrologic changes associated with earlier construction of railroad berms in these areas, and we requested that the DEIS/R “investigate ways to restore the downgradient areas as a potential mitigation component of this project.” While the document mentions restoration of Atlantic White Cedar Swamps as a potential mitigation measure, it does not provide a detailed plan for doing this or evaluate the feasibility of success. If the project impacts vernal pools or creates barriers to migration pathways, individuals that use these areas for breeding may not relocate to other pools. Rare species such as Blanding’s Turtle may decline if habitat is fragmented. Invasive plants, once introduced, may be difficult to remove without continuous monitoring, yet the DEIS/R provides no detailed plans for monitoring such areas and removing introduced plants. The NEPA/MEPA review should acknowledge the difficulties of these challenges, and provide detailed mitigation plans with an evaluation of the likelihood of success in an SDEIS/R.</p>	<p>The most likely restoration possibility for Atlantic white cedar (<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>) is located in Site G, the Burrage Pond WMA. Mitigation proposed in Area C of this WMA consists of removing the berm around the existing cranberry bog and (if necessary) excavating to provide hydrology suitable for <i>C. thyoides</i>. Creation of this specific wetland habitat would require a detailed study of the target area and the hydrology of the surrounding area to ensure long-term success of the wetland. Proposed mitigation at Site G is presented in Chapter 4.16.</p> <p>Restoring the historic hydraulic regime could impact the existing wetland vegetative communities in ways that would be difficult to predict and could have undesirable effects on the existing Atlantic white cedar community on the west side of the embankment. For this reason, removing the embankment to restore hydrology was not a mitigation option advanced for further analysis/design work. The objective was to preserve the existing wetland condition and minimize disturbance as much as possible.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.38	Mass Audubon	<p>Project cost and mitigation: The MEPA Certificate stated: "... cost is one of the key factors being used by EOT in selection of alternatives. The DEIR should include a detailed analysis of costs, including construction, operation and mitigation costs, for each of the alternatives." The Certificate also stated: "EOT is also basing its elimination and selection of alternatives on the basis of smart growth opportunities along the corridor," and required "an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project for each alternative, to fully understand the overall costs and rationale for selection of alternatives" (p. 16). As noted above, the document lacks mitigation plans. The cost of mitigation cannot be estimated without the mitigation plans. The Certificate also required a description of "how the proposed rail and/or bus routes, and associated Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan will be financed." This analysis is not provided. A SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs, an assessment of the costs of implementing the Corridor Plan and an explanation of how the project and Corridor Plan will be financed.</p>	<p>The cost estimate provided in Chapter 3, Table 3.2-22 and includes construction, operation, maintenance, and mitigation costs. The cost of implementing smart growth measures is not part of the South Coast Rail project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-064.39	Mass Audubon	<p>In a January 28, 2011 memo from Scott Peterson of the Central Transportation Planning Staff to the South Coast Rail Group Files, Mr. Peterson stated the analysis showed that there were 8,000 work trips from the SCR study area into the major Boston employment destination. Application of a 15% growth rate resulted in projection of 9,200 JTW trips in 2030. The memo lists the 28 cities and towns in the SCR study area. Several of the municipalities in this list currently have a commuter rail station (e.g., Attleboro, Mansfield, Lakeville) or are located close to one of those stations (e.g., Carver, Freetown, Rochester, Middleborough).</p> <p>The DEIS projects that the Stoughton Electric Route will attract 4,790 new station boardings, or 61% of the total ridership demand. The DEIS/R does not explain whether/how many of those projected riders are assumed to switch from use of an existing commuter rail line to South Coast Rail. The SDEIS/R should provide the complete analysis that yielded the projection of 4,790 new station boardings on the Stoughton Route and disclose the number of those “new” riders who would be diverted from existing lines.</p>	<p>Detailed information regarding the updated 2035 ridership projections, including changes in existing commuter line ridership, is provided in Appendix 4.1-H. It is true that some riders would switch stations/commuter rail lines. For example, Middleboro inbound boardings would decrease by 200 and Attleboro inbound boardings would decrease by 950 under the Stoughton Electric Alternative. Together, these shifts represent about 18 percent of the total increase in inbound boardings on the Stoughton line (6,250). The remainder of the ridership would be shifts from private auto and bus, as well as new trips made as a result of the availability of rail service.</p>
L-064.40	Mass Audubon	<p>To provide full disclosure and evaluation of the impacts to natural resources that are likely to result from this project that will enable regulatory officials to determine the project’s compliance with the requirements of applicable laws, we request preparation of a SDEIS/R. If a decision is made to not require preparation of a SDEIS and/or SDEIR, we request that the issues raised in this comment letter be addressed in the Final EIS/R.</p>	<p>Chapter 8 of the FEIS/FEIR provides a summary of regulatory compliance with applicable laws. A supplemental EIS/EIR was not necessary. The issues raised in the comment letter have been addressed (see responses to comments L-064.01 through L-064.39).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-001.01	Mass Audubon	<p>Mass Audubon is an abutter to the project through its ownership of the 954-acre Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeville which would be crossed by the proposed project. We have followed this project since 1997 and submitted previous comments to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office and the Army Corps of Engineers, and we have participated in the Commuter Rail Task Force since 2007.</p> <p>Mass Audubon generally supports commuter rail improvements as an alternative to highway expansion and as a means to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. We support the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan that identifies Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas as a means to achieve concentrated development on appropriate land in close proximity to transit and other infrastructure, preserve habitat and reduce vehicle-miles traveled. At the same time, this project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological significance and habitat for a number of state-listed species. This review needs to include sufficient information to ensure that impacts to those resources are avoided and minimized as much as possible and that unavoidable impacts are adequately mitigated as required by federal and state environmental laws.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-001.02	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R does not provide adequate baseline information regarding potentially impacted natural resources, detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts and a detailed blueprint for implementation of the Corridor Plan to demonstrate that projected benefits of the Plan will materialize. The Scope for the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review required that the Draft EIR include a detailed wetlands and rare species mitigation plan, but the DEIS/R states that the mitigation plan will be prepared at a later date. For these reasons, we request that you require preparation of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report (SDEIS/R). The following comments summarize our concerns. We will submit additional detailed comments by the end of the comment period.	Additional mitigation details are provided in this FEIS/FEIR.
R-001.03	Mass Audubon	The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate baseline information regarding important resources and impacts to those resources by the project, especially in the Southern Triangle portion of the rail corridor. In addition to Mass Audubon's land, the Southern Triangle lines also run through other sensitive areas including public conservation lands owned by the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp (an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a National Natural Landmark).	Chapter 4.10, Open Space, describes potential impacts to the specific open space locations along the South Coast Rail alignment. This includes potential impacts to Article 97 lands and other open spaces resulting from the updated design and mitigation measures for the impacted land. The project would not impact DCR property in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp. Chapter 4.16, Wetlands, describes wetland delineation procedures and how wetland impacts were calculated in reference to the current level of design.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-001.04	Mass Audubon	<p>The Scope for the DEIS/R requires information on the number and location of stream crossings associated with each alternative (p. 27). During a site visit to the portion of the rail line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp on November 16, 2011 conducted by three Mass Audubon staff members, Project Director Kristina Egan and other project staff, several culverts and streams that flowed along the right-of-way (ROW) were observed that are not identified in the DEIS/R. Although the Southern Triangle involves refurbishment and improvement of existing freight lines rather than entirely new construction as in the other portions of the project, it is nonetheless important to document resources and impacts along this portion of the route. In particular, it is important that the boundary between existing rail berms and wetlands be defined in relation to actual plans for the rail upgrading work so that impacts can be properly estimated, and that the condition of culverts and bridges where water flows under the berm be documented to identify where these structures would need to be replaced. In this section of our comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), we requested that the proponent complete a survey of all streams and culverts along the ROW. We reiterate that request.</p>	<p>Updated wetlands information is presented in Chapter 4.16. Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, describes the current and proposed conditions for each of the culverts that convey water and bridges that cross waterbodies (also see Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory for additional details).</p>
R-001.05	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R should also provide construction details of all stream crossings where work is proposed to allow full evaluation of potential impacts.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, describes the current and proposed conditions for each of the culverts that convey water and bridges that cross waterbodies (also see Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory for additional details).</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-001.06	Mass Audubon	<p>The MEPA Scope required that "the DEIR should include an endangered species impact analysis based on adequate species survey and habitat assessment for each alternative based on consultations with NHESP... " It also called for consultations with NHESP, Mass Audubon, and other impacted conservation landowners in determining which areas should be field surveyed for wetlands and rare species (p. 24). To the best of our knowledge, no rare species surveys were conducted in sensitive areas along the existing New Bedford and Fall River ROWs, including the Assonet and Acushnet Cedar Swamps; nor can we find any record of consultation with NHESP or conservation landowners in the DEIR.</p>	<p>The analyses requested by NHESP related to rare species are documented in Chapter 4.15. NHESP has determined that rare species field surveys were not required at this stage of project development.</p>
R-001.07	Mass Audubon	<p>The MEPA Scope also required that the DEIR "identify potential vernal pools, initially using maps and aerial photography and then verify in the field ... " It stated that "Potential vernal pool identification and certification should be conducted for areas within the right-of-way of the rail alignment and within a reasonable distance of the ROW...The DEIR should include the result of vernal pool investigations, including a description and mapping of those meeting the criteria for certification" (p. 26). It appears that no new vernal pool investigation was conducted for the Southern Triangle. Table 4.14-5, "Vernal Pools Within 100 Feet of South Coast Rail Alternatives" lists no vernal pools on the New Bedford line in the Assonet or Acushnet Cedar Swamps. At least one and possibly two potential vernal pools were observed on the portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp during the above-referenced site visit.</p>	<p>As described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area. Chapter 4.14 includes measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to vernal pools.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-001.08	Mass Audubon	<p>The DEIS/R also identifies projected impacts of induced growth and development from the project, compared to the "no build" scenario. Examples of the projected impacts are: increased vehicle miles traveled (VMTs); increases in greenhouse gas emissions related to new dispersed development and loss of forest and farmland. The Stoughton Alternative would add 75,422 VMTs per day and 20,750 tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions, and would increase loss of forestland by 575 acres and loss of farmland by 313 acres over the "no-build" alternative. The DEIS/R acknowledges the likelihood that loss of forest land would also result in loss of carbon sequestration, but does not quantify additional greenhouse gas emissions increases that would result as it should.</p> <p>The DEIS/R states that these impacts would be reduced by implementation of the Corridor Plan and evaluates the degree of mitigation provided by "high" and "low" implementation scenarios. Mass Audubon supports vigorous implementation of the Corridor Plan. We are concerned that the DEIS/R fails to provide a detailed blueprint for that implementation to document that impacts of induced growth will in fact be offset, and other projected benefits will be provided. We request that a detailed implementation plan be developed and included in an SDEIS/R which includes a demonstrated financial commitment to the needed state, regional and local planning and land use regulatory reforms that will be needed to fully implement the Corridor Plan.</p>	<p>Various studies have attempted to quantify the role of forests in helping to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, but the analysis is complex and depends on multiple variables, many of which are poorly understood. The carbon sequestration capacity of individual tree species, the age of forests, the volume of trees cut down, and soil disturbance are a few examples of multiple factors that would affect carbon emissions in a certain area. Because it is very complex and not well understood, quantitative analysis of carbon sequestration was not undertaken for the South Coast Rail alternatives.</p> <p>Implementation of the Corridor Plan is discussed in Section 5.5 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-001.09	Mass Audubon	Despite the significance of the projected impacts, the DEIS/R fails to provide mitigation plans to replace lost resources and their functions and values. Without the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory standards of the MWPA, MESA and the state and federal CWA. The MEPA Certificate on the ENF for this project specifically required detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for impacts to rare species (p. 24), wetlands (p. 27) and biodiversity and wildlife (p. 29).	Additional information on mitigation plans is provided in the FEIS/FEIR. Regulatory compliance is addressed in Chapter 8.
R-001.10	Mass Audubon	In some cases, projected impacts may be difficult to mitigate. For example, attempts to replicate or restore Atlantic White Cedar Swamp have yielded mixed results in the past. Vernal pool species that encounter barriers to migration may not relocate to other pools. Rare species such as Blanding's turtle may decline if habitat is fragmented. Invasive plants, once introduced, may be difficult to remove without continuous monitoring. The NEPA/MEPA review should acknowledge the difficulties of these challenges, and provide detailed mitigation plans with an evaluation of the likelihood of success in an SDEIS/R.	Areas proposed for mitigation were located as much as possible within areas of threatened and endangered species habitat. Habitat for Atlantic white cedar ( <i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i> ) is proposed in Area C of Site G, the Burrage Pond WMA. Creation of specific wetland habitats or vernal pools would require a detailed study of the target area and the hydrology of the surrounding area to ensure long-term success of the wetland or pool.
R-001.11	Mass Audubon	The MEPA Certificate required that the DEIS/R provide a detailed analysis of costs, including construction, operation and mitigation costs, for each of the alternatives (emphasis added), as well as an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project (p. 16). As noted above, the document lacks mitigation plans. The cost of mitigation cannot be estimated without the mitigation plans. The Certificate also required the DEIS/R to address how the project and the Corridor Plan will be financed; this analysis is not provided. An SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs and an explanation of how the project and Corridor Plan will be financed.	The cost estimate provided in Chapter 3, Table 3.2-22 includes construction, operation, maintenance, and mitigation costs. The cost of implementing smart growth measures is not part of the South Coast Rail project

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-002.01	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC), a not for profit organization representing more than 350 conservation commissions throughout the Commonwealth, is hereby requesting a 90 day extension of the closing date for receipt of comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the South Coast Rail Project, US ACOE Regulatory File No. NAE-200700698, EEA #14346. MACC, as a pre-eminent wetlands advocacy and educational organization within Massachusetts, is highly interested in reviewing the DEIS/DEIR because of the potential impact on sensitive wetland and other environmental resources throughout the South Coast area.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-002.02	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	Given the scope, and scale of the DEIS/DEIR comprising more than 2500 pages of detailed technical data and analyses, the complexity and diversity of the subject matter addressed, MACC believes it and other parties have not been afforded sufficient time to prepare for, develop, compile and submit the level of commentary that this ambitious environmental impact review requires and deserves. To allow proper and reasonably complete review of such a massive study, we respectfully ask for a 90 day extension until August 26, 2011.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-080.01	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	MACC commends the effort in completing the DEIR/DEIS document. However, the DEIS is overly broad and lacking in specificity and detail, especially with regard to the estimation of wetlands and habitat impacts and the proposed mitigation measures to account for these impacts. The document defers analysis of proposed mitigation measures for wetland and habitat loss based on assumed uncertainties in final construction and layout details, yet the MEPA Certificate on the ENF clearly calls for the presentation of such a mitigation plan in reasonable detail. The DEIR/DEIS falls short of fulfilling the requirements of the MEPA scope in numerous specific areas.	Further refinements to the impact assessment and mitigation plans are presented for review in this FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-080.02	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	In the document, a number of preliminary design decisions, which will have substantial environmental impacts, have been given only passing consideration. One example of this would be the failure to consider appropriate access allowances for 3.3 miles of single line of the rail proceeding through the Hockomock Swamp for repair and emergency response services. Although we appreciate the environmental considerations which led to this decision of a single line, we question whether an honest assessment of the likely full range of those impacts is possible without more detailed consideration of emergency access, maintenance, and other safety issues associated with a “stranded” single line layout.	As described in the Hockomock Swamp Technical Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C), constructing and maintaining the trestle and ROW will not require an access road.
L-080.03	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	<p>Moreover, the overall level of the analysis is insufficient to determine the full range of impacts for the preferred alternative and, in so doing, gives short shrift to the difficulties that will be encountered in meeting the requirements of the project to comply with critical environmental laws, including the federal and state Clean Water Acts, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and Article 97 of the State Constitution.</p> <p>MACC believes strongly that the estimation of likely impacts on wetlands-related resources and the scope of needed mitigation means and methods, as briefly summarized in the following comments, do not meet the standards set forth in the MEPA Certificate. In order to address these deficiencies, additional analysis is needed, which would best be provided via a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR. At a minimum, the serious concerns related to an underestimation of the full range of impacts - present in the current document – should be addressed in appropriate detail and scope in the Final EIR/EIS for this project.</p>	<p>USACE disagrees that the level of impact analysis was insufficient. Regulatory compliance is addressed in Chapter 8.</p> <p>Additional wetlands mitigation information is provided in Chapter 4.16, including identification of specific candidate sites.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-080.04	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	Sufficient detail has not been provided to determine the full range of impacts that will be associated with the inevitable fragmentation of the major wetlands associated with the preferred Stoughton alternative, the major impact on highly sensitive populations including loss of over 32 acres from the habitat of nine state-listed species, and the potentially serious impacts that even slight changes in hydrology (related to stream relocation and construction/replacement of stream crossings) may have on the rare Atlantic White Cedar Swamp ecosystem.	In coordination with other agencies, a methodology was developed to assess secondary/indirect impacts on wetland functions. The results are presented in Chapter 4.16.
L-080.05	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	The DEIS/DEIR has substantially underreported the full number and distribution of affected vernal pool habitats, in addition to the likely substantial impacts within 100 feet of those pools as identified in the document.	As described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area. Chapter 4.14 includes measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to vernal pools.
L-080.06	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	No specific information is presented regarding mitigation measures that will be undertaken to comply with requirements under the Clean Water Act, WPA, and MESA. Variances under the WPA and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act will be needed. Such variances are contingent on a variety of findings, including a determination that proposed mitigation measures will contribute to the protection of interests identified in these laws. The absence of concrete mitigation planning in many instances raises significant concerns as to how such mitigation measures are to be structured, permitted and funded.	The level of information on mitigation in the DEIS/DEIR was appropriate given the number of alternatives under consideration at that time. Additional mitigation information specific to the Stoughton/Whittenton Alternatives is provided in this FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-080.07	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	Overall, MACC is highly concerned with the continuing, un-fragmented viability of the Hockomock Swamp and preservation of its unique status as the largest freshwater wetland in the Commonwealth. The fragmentation issues associated with the loss of forest canopy, and the apparent balkanization of the hydrologic analysis related to the various stream crossings suggest that the level of detail offered is simply insufficient to determine the full range of plausible impacts and the degree of difficulty associated with their compensation. The Conservation and Assessment Prioritization System analysis included in the DEIR/DEIS shows that large areas of this natural area will suffer significant loss of ecological integrity. These impacts extend well beyond the boundaries of the rail right-of-way, and will affect Article 97 lands owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, all in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.	Fragmentation impacts (including the CAPS analysis) are addressed in Chapter 4.14.
L-080.08	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	The issues associated with the acquisition and indirect alteration of protected lands have not been adequately considered. Further consideration of the legal and access difficulties should be addressed.	Regulatory compliance is addressed in Chapter 8.
L-080.09	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions	At the same time, there is a perceived public preference for certain rail line alternatives at the expense of the bus line alternative which presents ecological impacts that are only a tiny fraction of those expected from rail line construction. Given this compelling logic, it appears reasonable and fair to expect that the full extent of those rail line impacts, and an honest assessment of the difficulties and feasibility of necessary mitigation methods, should be presented. MACC hopes to see some of this hard thinking and detailed assessment, in the next phase of the analysis which we hope will comprise a Supplement document to the DEIR/DEIS.	The DEIS/DEIR and this FEIS/FEIR provide a full analysis of impacts and mitigation. The FEIS/FEIR analyses are informed by changes based on comments on the DEIS/DEIR, among other changes.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-062.01	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance	The Alliance's mission is to protect and restore rivers across the Commonwealth. The Alliance supports public transit and smart growth as measures to promote sustainable development patterns to reduce future growth impacts on the commonwealth's rivers and other important environmental assets. The Department of Transportation's (DOT) preferred alternative for the project has substantial impacts to streams (over 50 stream crossings, relocation of ½ mile of a perennial stream); wetlands (12 acres of alteration, dozens of vernal pools within 100 feet of the work); rare species habitats; and state, local and private conservation lands. Therefore it is important that the environmental review processes through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) thoroughly document and analyze project impacts, alternatives to avoid and minimize impacts, and that the state require mitigation to compensate for unavoidable impacts.	Impacts have been thoroughly documented and mitigation developed, as appropriate.
L-062.02	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance	Additional Information Needed: The MEPA Certificate on the ENF provided an extensive and detailed scope for review, including requirements for presentation of mitigation plans in the Draft EIR. The DEIS/R falls short of fully documenting impacts and mitigation as described in the scope and as necessary to ensure the project will fully meet requirements of key environmental laws including the federal and state Clean Water Acts, Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, and Article 97 of the State Constitution protecting public conservation lands. The Alliance requests that a Supplemental DEIS/R be prepared to provide the additional information needed, or if this request is denied, that the Final EIS/R provide this information.	This FEIS/FEIR provides additional mitigation information. The level of information in the DEIS/DEIR was appropriate given the range of alternatives under consideration at that time.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-062.03	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance	<p>Fragmentation of Hockomock Swamp: DOT's preferred alternative for the project is the Stoughton route, involving reconstruction of a long-abandoned rail line through the Hockomock Swamp. The rails and ties were removed decades ago and the corridor has overgrown, nearly closing the canopy in most areas. The Conservation and Assessment Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis performed by UMass for the project found that reconstructing a rail line along this corridor would significantly impact the ecological integrity of the swamp. Work would also traverse the Pine Swamp in Raynham, and existing freight lines would be upgraded including sections running through Mass Audubon's Assonet Cedar Swamp and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Acushnet Cedar Swamp.</p> <p>The Hockomock Swamp is the largest freshwater wetland in Massachusetts and an Area of Critical Environmental Concern; most of the swamp is owned by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), except for the rail right-of-way. The Hockomock and other areas impacted by the project support Atlantic White Cedar Swamp natural communities which are rare and sensitive to even slight alterations in hydrology. Habitat of nine state-listed rare species would be altered by the project.</p>	<p>The impacts cited in the comment are addressed in the FEIS/FEIR. The CAPS analysis is relatively coarse-grained and does not account for existing fragmentation of Hockomock Swamp caused by the existing railroad grade. Although closure of the canopy gap has largely occurred, it is incorrect to presume that the existing grade has not had an ongoing and lasting effect on ecological integrity. To wit: existing use of the ROW by all-terrain vehicles to access and ride through vernal pools continues to severely affect vulnerable (i.e., breeding, egg and larval) life stages of amphibians within the swamp. Further, initial establishment of the grade in ca. 1863-66 has confined Atlantic white cedar to the western side of the swamp; the eastern side is predominantly red maple. Neither of these effects is measured by the CAPS analysis.</p>
L-062.04	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance	<p>Stream Relocation and Culvert Crossings: A perennial stream presently flows along the rail right-of-way for a distance of ½ mile in the Hockomock Swamp. The DEIS/R states that this stream will be improved by relocating it outside of the right-of-way but does not provide any information or plans for that relocation. Since the abutting land is swamp owned by DFG, it appears likely that additional impacts to wetlands, rare species habitat, and Article 97 lands will be required for the stream relocation.</p>	<p>Based on agency input, relocation of the stream was deemed impractical and the consensus of reviewing agencies was that resources would be better spent elsewhere on other mitigation efforts. The original channel of the stream would be restored in place on the west side of the right-of-way, and the stream would discharge into the wetlands adjacent to mitigation Site B. Article 97 issues will be addressed if stream relocation or mitigation measures would affect Article 97-protected properties.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-062.05	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance	The DEIS/R also indicates that numerous stream crossings along the entire route of the project will need to be reconstructed. Since many of these streams flow through abutting wetlands and rare species habitats protected by state, local, or private conservation organizations plans for each site of culvert work are needed to fully document project impacts and mitigation. The Rivers Alliance supports upgrading of existing culverts to meet the stream crossing standards to the extent feasible, provided detailed analyses are performed to ensure that adverse impacts to hydrology of Atlantic White Cedar Swamps will be avoided.	Chapter 4.14 and Appendix 4.14-A provide detailed information on stream crossings. Each bridge will be replaced and each culvert will be evaluated for replacement for engineering purposes. All structures that would be replaced will be evaluated to determine if meeting Stream Crossing Standards can be accomplished within the engineering constraints of a high-speed rail line as well as, where appropriate, not altering the hydrology of adjacent wetlands. Recommendations for each culvert are provided in Appendix 4.14-A; engineering and hydraulic analyses will be conducted during preliminary and final design.
L-075.01	Massachusetts Sierra Club	Ridership is the key component to making any train service sustainable. It is for this reason that the Sierra Club has stated publicly the Stoughton alignment may ultimately represent the least environmentally damaging alternative to restore service. Project calculations indicate that other alignments would not attract sufficient ridership to make the service viable.	Thank you for your comment.
L-075.02	Massachusetts Sierra Club	The inclusion of an electric option for train service is important. The negative impacts of land required for transformer stations / pole bases, and an elevated price for the project, could be outweighed by the significant advantages of less noise, less diesel fuel pollution, better acceleration of the trains, and higher average speed which will reduce travel times.	Both diesel and electric options were evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-075.03	Massachusetts Sierra Club	Early in the review process the Sierra Club had requested at public meetings that a comprehensive “no-build” analysis be presented to the public. We believe this context is essential to understand the impacts of not building the South Coast rail project so the public can better understand the choices being made today that will impact not only sensitive natural resources, but also their quality of life in the future. The documents do not seem to contain an analysis that describes highway or other expansion that may be necessary to accommodate increased population and traffic if the project is not built, nor what the region may look like in the future if the smart growth measures proposed by the project are not implemented and growth patterns are instead driven by non-transit-oriented development.	<p>The No-Build scenario includes reasonably foreseeable future transportation projects, as identified in long-range planning documents and these projects were assumed to occur whether or not the South Coast Rail project is constructed. Specific highway improvements that would result from not building the South Coast Rail project were not identified and would be too speculative to include in the analysis.</p> <p>The FEIS/FEIR presents extensive analysis of future development patterns with and without smart growth measures in Chapter 5.</p>
L-075.04	Massachusetts Sierra Club	The DEIS/R addresses three options, two of them rail and the third an enhanced bus route. The Sierra Club believes that the Stoughton Alternative, which we acknowledge passes through old seaport cities, rural towns and wetlands, has the potential to create smart growth opportunities for all communities on the route, as well as reduce the need for continued highway expansion through the region. It should be noted that highways already pass through most if not all the same areas that are now proposed for the rail expansion.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-075.05	Massachusetts Sierra Club	<p>South Coast Rail also has the potential to improve environmental elements along the way because it could be used to restore hydrological connections between parts of the Hockomock Swamp that were isolated when the original rail bed construction took place in the 1890's. It is for this reason that the Sierra Club previously supported a trestle design for rights of way through wetland areas. However, our review of the document indicates that the trestle would largely be built on the existing embankment with only periodic culverts to allow for slightly increased wetlands connectivity.</p> <p>The proponents should apply all knowledge available to help utilize the construction window to improve the hydrology and functions of the wetlands system. Location and function of culverts is as important as keeping them clear and flowing. The restoration should address in detail wildlife corridors and where best to locate them, especially due to the presence of vernal pools and rare species in the vicinity of the rail bed. Both wet and dry wildlife crossings should be described and provided for.</p>	<p>Wildlife crossings at culvert and bridge locations will be designed in accordance with the Stream Crossing Standards, as described in Chapter 4.14. Recommendations for specific locations are provided in Appendix 4.14-A, Bridge and Culvert Inventory. Design details will be developed during preliminary and final design. Additional wildlife crossings, consisting of tunnels and between-tie structures, will be sited at the locations identified in Figures 4.14-11a through 4.14-14b.</p> <p>Attempting to restore the historic hydraulic regime could impact the existing wetland vegetative communities in ways that would be difficult to predict and could have undesirable effects on the existing Atlantic white cedar community on the west side of the embankment. For this reason, removing the embankment to restore hydrology was not a mitigation option advanced for further analysis/design work. The objective was to preserve the existing wetland condition and minimize disturbance as much as possible.</p>
L-075.06	Massachusetts Sierra Club	<p>We request that the alternative thoroughly analyze other trestle designs that may increase connectivity in the wetlands so that the project truly creates a benefit to the areas impacted by the existing rail bed. While we are not experts on this matter, we envision that much of the existing embankment could be removed and still allow for the servicing of the rail line. This could mitigate impacts by improving the hydrology of the wetlands.</p>	<p>Approximately 8,500 feet of the railroad bed within the Hockomock Swamp will be bridged by a trestle that will allow wildlife passage underneath. The railroad bed will not be removed here or at any other location, as removal would adversely affect the hydrology of the swamp. Existing culverts within the trestle segment will be daylighted in order to improve wildlife passage through these structures.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-075.07	Massachusetts Sierra Club	The DEIS/R considers adding larger culverts, improving the existing openings and using the existing grade as the base. The possibility of the old railway grade being dug out from a machine located on the new trestle and the spoil transported by rail to some place or other not close by should be examined. We request this option, or something similar to achieve the desired goals, be explored in more detail. The analysis should describe construction techniques and design elements that will be implemented to minimize the environmental impact.	Approximately 8,500 feet of the railroad bed within the Hockomock Swamp will be bridged by a trestle that will allow wildlife passage underneath. The railroad bed will not be removed here or at any other location, as removal would adversely affect the hydrology of the swamp. Existing culverts within the trestle segment will be daylighted in order to improve wildlife passage through these structures.
L-075.08	Massachusetts Sierra Club	One issue not mentioned in the DEIS/R is the failure to consider what would happen to the existing embankment if the Stoughton Alternative is not chosen. ATV's are now using the route extensively and the earth surface at grade is being spread into the adjoining swamps, streams and vernal pools. Subsequent use of the embankment by trespassers and ATV's could be minimized by reactivation of the rail corridor.	The commenter is correct that the trestle will greatly reduce existing ATV use.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-075.09	Massachusetts Sierra Club	<p>Not only is the Stoughton Alternative the shortest of the three options – an important consideration for passengers – it can also resolve a major concern at the already crowded platforms at South Station congestion by lengthening the route of the already existing Stoughton trains. We are however concerned about the present and future capacities of South Station to handle the increased ridership the Stoughton branch would bring.</p> <p>Both North and South station, as part of a broken northeast rail system, cannot handle indefinitely the increased ridership at both ends as long as there exists no connector between the two stations. As each new project on the fringe of the system connects into a dead-end system (as it exists now) the need is increased to construct the North-South Rail Link to provide the system the elasticity to expand and absorb increased and future demands on ridership. The creation of a "flow -through" system with the North-South Rail Link would increase ridership and efficiencies on the entire system, including the Stoughton alternative.</p>	<p>Capacity issues at South Station are assumed to be addressed as part of the independent South Station Expansion project.</p> <p>The proposal for a North-South Rail Link in Boston is beyond the scope of this EIS/EIR.</p>
L-075.10	Massachusetts Sierra Club	<p>While the DEIS/R appears to have included mitigation costs as part of the overall budget, it is difficult to understand the mitigation costs without a comprehensive mitigation plan that identifies where and how mitigation will occur. This should be more thoroughly analyzed to enable the public to fully understand the implications of the project and how impacts will be mitigated. Some wetland areas likely to be impacted by the project have been difficult to replicate.</p>	<p>More detailed information on proposed mitigation sites is provided in Chapter 4.16, although it is not possible to estimate costs for each site in detail at this time.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-075.11	Massachusetts Sierra Club	<p>The Sierra Club recognizes that this project raises concerns regarding impacts on sensitive natural areas. The review must accurately describe impacts given that there clearly is a “balancing act” occurring that weighs the benefits of rail service against wetlands, rare species, and vernal pool habitat. Ultimately, we must ask, what will the South Coast look like 20 years from now if population increases in the area without the commuter rail line and highways must be expanded in sensitive natural areas instead to accommodate growth in southeastern Massachusetts?</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-006.01	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce	<p>Members of the Government Affairs Committee of the Greater New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce reviewed and discussed your draft report on the environmental impact of the several proposed routes, and were very pleased you appear to have come to the same conclusion as that of many members of the Massachusetts legislative delegation: that the Stoughton family of alternatives makes the most sense...from both an environmental as well as an economic standpoint.</p> <p>We in the Southcoast have been wishing for the passenger rail line to come to New Bedford and Fall River since the 1980’s. Not only would the rail enable Massachusetts residents to travel south to our beautiful coastal area, it would also relieve the congestion on the roadways for those headed northward to Boston and environs. As you well know, commuters traveling by rail generate so much less in hydro-carbons to pollute our precious air. And, according to your draft report, you seem to support the idea that the Stoughton route would pose the least environmental risk.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-002.01	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce	<p>The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce remains a strong advocate for the extension of commuter rail service from Boston to New Bedford and other communities in the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts.</p> <p>The Chamber agrees with the conclusions that identify the Stoughton alternative as providing the best service to the communities in the South Coast region and providing the least environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective. Also, the fact that the Stoughton route follows rail beds that were in use a little over fifty years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
R-002.02	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce	We believe the final report should include double tracking the rail lines to provide future capacity and faster service. It is important that any design, permitting, and building of the rail service be completed with an eye towards enhancing or expanding the service in the future.	Portions of the corridor would be single-track, see Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8. The alternatives were designed for 2035 demand.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-002.03	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce	In addition, the Chamber also believes that travel time and frequency of service will be important factors to the success of this project. To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel time from the South Coast to Boston South Station be no more than seventy minutes. Shorter commuting time gives businesses greater access to more workers with specialized skills, while residents of the region gain connectivity to employment opportunities along the Route 128 corridor and in the business districts of Boston. We also encourage full service throughout the day to meet demand and encourage ridership. A minimum of three trains in the morning peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak period should be utilized. This includes full weekend service and inter-city service between Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River to encourage regional mobility. We would also like to see a late evening train service to Boston to be considered for residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service would help support our growing tourism economy by connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our national park, our ferry service to Martha's Vineyard, and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene here in the South Coast.	Thank you for your comment.
R-002.04	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce	The Chamber believes commuter rail extension is critical to economic development and growth in the region and in keeping with long-range "Smart Growth" planning strategies that support the environment and encourage development around priority development areas. Commuter rail extension to the South Coast will also help meet existing and future demand for public transportation and enhance regional mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region by reducing congestion and increasing travel choice.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
R-002.05	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce	On behalf of our Chamber member businesses and their thousands of employees, we encourage the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This is an important project for the South Coast region. The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a 50-mile radius of Boston without rail transit service, service that will provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the state. We have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for this process to be completed, so that the state can move onto the next critical step in the project.	Thank you for your comment.
L-030.01	New Bedford Economic Development Council	The NBEDC fully supports the South Coast Rail project, and specifically supports the proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative as the most viable alternative with the least impact to wetlands and wildlife than any other alternative.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-030.02	New Bedford Economic Development Council	<p>As the lead economic development agency for the City of New Bedford, the NBEDC has a mission to work collaboratively at the city, state, and federal levels to promote sustainable job retention and creation. To achieve this mission we are implementing a balanced, aggressive, and multi-faceted strategy for economic development of which re-establishing commuter rail service to Boston is a critical component. South Coast Rail is a central element to our transportation goals outlined in the City's master plan, New Bedford 2020, and will serve as a catalyst for private investment and job creation.</p> <p>The proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative will be a catalyst for targeted economic growth along the corridor creating 2000 jobs and \$228 million in private investment by 2030. In New Bedford we are now constructing three new rail bridges for the project through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grant Program, and are implementing new zoning for Transportation Oriented Districts in the areas of the two station locations. The two South Cost Rail stations in New Bedford will promote the development of 1750 new housing units and 750,000 square feet of new commercial space.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-030.03	New Bedford Economic Development Council	This project has been studied since 1990 and with continued delay only comes increases in project cost and no advancement of the transportation network to the New Bedford Region. This project has been fully studied, is well planned, and has always had civic engagement as a central element to its advancement. Any further extension of the comment period is unwarranted.	Thank you for your comment.
L-030.04	New Bedford Economic Development Council	We urge that the Final EIS/EIR address only the Stoughton Electric Alternative and the immediate opportunities to begin construction of the line from New Bedford to Taunton.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-015.01	Precix	<p>I am writing to you today to support south coast rail (to both New Bedford and Fall River). I am writing to you as both business owner/operator and resident of the south coast.</p> <p>Our region continues to grow and we are the gateway to the Islands for thousands of people traveling to/from Martha's Vineyard. Every morning literally thousands of cars make the trek up 140 to 24 and beyond to get to jobs downtown and inside/around 128 - many of these folks are prime candidates for rail and deserve this option (as those who make their way down here for the ferry deserve this option).</p> <p>Moving forward on this project, which I and countless others hope is "a go," please keep the following in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The path/tracks should allow for expansion - we are the fastest growing region in the state and I don't see this changing anytime soon;</li> <li>-Travel ravel time to South Station needs to be kept to 70 minutes or less if at all possible;</li> <li>-Encourage folks to use the train and not parking offsite by keeping onsite parking fees low. Since the system increased parking fees I have seen the lots far less full than they used to be.</li> </ul>	Thank you for your comment.
E-003.01	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	I respectfully request that the federal government extend their comment period and give us 120 days to fully digest this voluminous EIS.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.01	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Our attendance at the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force Meetings since their inception has demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the Commonwealth, for whatever reason, would do whatever it could to stubbornly cling to this ill-advised and potentially illegal alternative. We have spent countless hours reviewing and commenting on Environmental Notification Forms, Corridor Plans, ridership analyses, and various other documents, only to discover that our comments are rarely taken seriously or given due consideration.	Comments from the public have been taken seriously throughout the process.
L-061.02	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The Commonwealth did not adequately address concerns articulated in response to the ENF. As you are aware, PEER previously submitted comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the South Coast rail project, as well as the scope of the federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the state Environmental Impact Report (EIR). However, the responses to these comments, included in the DEIS/DEIR in an Appendix, are primarily non-responsive. Others refer the reader to incorrect sections in the DEIS/DEIR for responses to their comments. For example, comments on PEER's letters state that Table 3.3-12 in the DEIS/DEIR describes the cost per rider. However, Table 3.3-12 actually portrays the proposed construction schedule. This is not an isolated example; the errata contained throughout the documents made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to navigate the information. At the very least, MassDOT's responses should not send readers on a wild goose chase for the correct information.	MassDOT regrets any unintentional errors in the responses to comments on the Environmental Notification Form.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.03	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The purpose and need for the project. 33 CFR 320.4(a)2(i) states that the Corps must consider in its Section 404 decision-making, among other things, “[t]he relative extent of the public and private need for the proposed structure or work.” In order to assess the practicability of alternatives, and ultimately determine the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA), the Corps must identify a basic project purpose for each project. In this case, the Corps and the Commonwealth have identified similar yet unique project purposes for this project. As such, as PEER has stated numerous times, there is an inherent conflict between the state and federal processes. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) claims that its project purpose statement is merely “a statement of the Commonwealth’s objectives in advancing the project” (see p. 362 of Appendix 8, comment N-025-003. However, it is much more than that. By narrowly defining the project purpose to “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities” (see p. 2.1 of the DEIS/DEIR), MassDOT is limiting the range of alternatives it deems acceptable/practicable to those that enhance regional mobility and support smart growth. On the other hand, the Corps’ basic project purpose is “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts” (Id.). The Corps’ project purpose should, if the analysis is done in an unbiased manner, result in a larger pool of alternatives from which to choose. Nevertheless, PEER believes that the Corps should have ensured that the basic project purpose, the overall project purpose, and the purpose and need should have been the same. Different project purposes, or unclear and poorly defined project purposes, will increase the likelihood of disputes the practicability of alternatives. In this case, the Corps’ basic project purpose clearly renders the Rapid Bus a practicable alternative, yet MassDOT has rejected it as</p>	<p>The USACE basic project purpose commonly differs slightly from the project purpose of the applicant. However, it is the overall project purpose that is used to evaluate practicable alternatives under the Guidelines. The USACE basic project purpose is necessary for the assessment of a project's water dependency pursuant to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines.</p> <p>The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		impracticable.	
L-061.04	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Definition of the South Coast study area is inconsistent, and renders many analyses worthless. The DEIS/DEIR defines the South Coast study area in several different ways. For example, pages 4.2-4 and 4.2-5 state:</p> <p>The communities that would be served or that could be impacted by the proposed South Coast Rail alternatives are listed in Table 4.2-1. The alternative railroad or highway alignments pass through or near these 27 communities, and new station sites are within or near each.</p> <p>Table 4.2-1, labeled “Land Use Study Area Communities” then lists the following communities: Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Canton, Dartmouth, Dighton, Easton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Foxborough, Freetown, Lakeville, Mansfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, North Attleborough, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Sharon, Somerset, Stoughton, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport.</p> <p>However, the January 28, 2011 memorandum from Scott Peterson of the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) regarding South Coast Rail Work Trips to Boston, which is cited in the DEIS/DEIR states, “The SCR study area consists of 28 communities, which are identified below....” The memo then lists the following towns: Acushnet, Attleboro, Berkley, Bourne, Carver, Dartmouth, Dighton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Mansfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, North Attleborough, Norton, Raynham, Rehoboth, Rochester, Sharon, Somerset, Stoughton, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport. Therefore, this SCR study area deleted the five towns of Canton, Easton, Foxborough, Sharon, Stoughton, and added the six towns of Bourne, Carver, Marion, Plainville, Seekonk, and Wareham. Since this latter study area was used to determine ridership, it is critical to the analysis contained in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>For most analyses, the South Coast Region is defined as the 27 communities within Massachusetts listed in Table 4.2-1 of the DEIS/DEIR, plus the four neighboring Rhode Island communities of Bristol, Portsmouth, Tiverton, and Warren that would be served by the South Coast Rail project. The ridership demand modeling is influenced by the transportation network of a much broader area, encompassing much of eastern Massachusetts. A four-step process (trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice, and trip assignment) encompassed 182 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts to develop a regional travel model upon which the ridership demand for the South Coast Rail project could be based. The methodology that was used is described in DEIS/DEIR Appendix 3.2-C.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.05	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The DEIS/DEIR then states, “No commuter rail service is offered within the South Coast Rail study area. The nearest commuter lines (MBTA’s Providence Line and Middleborough Lines) terminate northwest and northeast of the South Coast region” (see p. 4.1-14; emphasis added). This statement is patently false and misleading. In fact, at least four towns defined as being within the SCR study area by Mr. Peterson have existing commuter rail stations: Attleboro, Lakeville, Mansfield, and Middleborough. Moreover, there are eight existing commuter rail stations in the South Coast study area as defined by Table 4.2-1 of the DEIS/DEIR: Attleboro, Canton (two stations), Lakeville, Mansfield, Middleborough, Sharon, and Stoughton.	The language in question has been clarified in the FEIS/FEIR based on the comment.
L-061.06	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The fact that the Corps and MassDOT cannot provide a consistent definition of the South Coast Region, on which all the analyses are based, is of grave concern to PEER. As such, we urge the Corps and MassDOT to produce a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR (SDEIS/SDEIR) so that the public is confident that the analyses are correct. The SDEIS/SDEIR must provide a single, consistent definition of the study area, and calculate ridership, impacts, and alternatives based upon this single definition.	See response to comment L-061.04.
L-061.07	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Moreover, we suggest that the Corps and MassDOT read the DEIS/DEIR and supporting documentation more carefully, to catch these blatantly false statements and eliminate them from the documents. PEER believes that any court would agree that such basic mistakes must be remedied before issuance of a FEIS/FEIR; to do otherwise makes a mockery of the NEPA/MEPA process.	To the extent comments have identified errors in the DEIS/DEIR, corrections have been made in the FEIS/FEIR in accordance with the direction of the CEQ NEPA regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 1503.4(a)(4).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.08	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The ridership analysis is flawed. The DEIS/DEIR ridership analysis is flawed due to the area from which it obtains the initial Journey to Work (JTW) data, and due to assumptions that are incorrect. The DEIS/DEIR explains its ridership analysis as follows:</p> <p>Traffic demand estimated for the alternatives are based on ridership forecasts developed by the CTPS. CTPS developed these forecasts based on a number of variables, such as observed commuter rail ridership in similar areas, magnitude of service to be provided, and future estimates of population and employment within the South Coast region and greater Boston area. All of these data were analyzed via a regional travel demand model, which ultimately provided a future ridership estimate for the proposed service (DEIS/DEIR p. 4.1-7).</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR also states:</p> <p>In order to estimate overall transit demand for the region, an optimal transit system with no constraints such as construction costs or environmental impacts would have to be simulated. While this optimal transit demand has not been quantified, demand was measured in terms of the number of daily work-related trips between South Coast communities and Boston. For this screening analysis, transit demand was based on 2000 Journey to-Work (JTW) data. Total service to the South Coast Region was considered the total station boardings as projected for each alternative in addition to boardings at existing commuter bus services, which is anticipated to continue to operate with the South Coast Rail project in place. According to the JTW data, the number of daily work trips from the South Coast region to Boston is approximately 8,000. The ability of the alternative to meet possible future ridership potential was calculated as the percent of met ridership demand (DEIS/DEIR, p. 3-122).</p> <p>As stated above, the South Coast region is defined throughout the DEIS/DEIR in several different ways. It is not</p>	<p>The 8,000 JTW trips was based on the 28 communities listed in the 2011 CTPS memo Work Trips to Boston, included in the FEIS/FEIR as Appendix 2.2-A. A 2013 CTPS memo also included in Appendix 2.2-A discusses the latest available American Community Survey journey to work data for 2006-2010 in comparison to the 2000 Census data.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		clear which of the various definitions was used to determine that there are 8,000 daily work trips to the Boston area.	
L-061.09	New England Public Employees for Public Responsibility	<p>However, as we stated in our letter on the ENF, the Journey to Work data state that 741 people from New Bedford commute to the Boston area, and 714 commute there from Fall River (see <a href="http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/commuting/mcdworkerflow.html">http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/commuting/mcdworkerflow.html</a>). This is a total of 1,455 commuting to Boston and Cambridge from Fall River and New Bedford. What the DEIS/DEIR does not mention is that 1,667 people from Fall River commute to New Bedford for work, with another 1,248 commuting to Somerset, and another 1,078 commuting to Swansea (Id.). Similarly, 1,902 people living in New Bedford commute to Fall River, 2,145 to Fairhaven, and 3,761 to Dartmouth (Id.). Therefore, it is worth noting that 11,801 people travel among the cities and towns of Fall River, New Bedford, Somerset, Swansea, Fairhaven and Dartmouth, while only 1,455 travel to Boston. It seems clear that the transportation need is between and among these southern cities, and not to Boston.</p>	<p>As described in Chapter 2 the transportation system between the South Coast Region and Downtown Boston is inadequate in meeting existing and future demand in terms of capacity and public transportation options, as indicated by the congestion of the existing transportation system. It is inadequate to meet the demand of the growing South Coast region, both in terms of connectivity to Boston and in terms of regional mobility. Furthermore, the existing transportation system's lack of public transportation options contributes to negative effects on air quality and transportation safety resulting from vehicle emissions and traffic congestion.</p>
L-061.10	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>In fact, of the 28 communities listed in the CTPS memo, 13 or more of them have existing, operating train stations closer to them than the ones that would exist if the proposed line were built. The SDEIS/SDEIR should remove the ridership numbers from these towns that already have closer train stations in order to present more accurate ridership projections.</p>	<p>The ridership projections were presented accurately. Detailed information regarding the ridership projections, including changes in existing commuter line ridership, is provided in Appendix 4.1-H. It is true that some riders would switch stations/commuter rail lines. For example, Middleboro inbound boardings would decrease by 200 and Attleboro inbound boardings would decrease by 950 under the Stoughton Electric Alternative. Together, these shifts represent about 18 percent of the total increase in inbound boardings on the Stoughton line (6,250). The remainder of the ridership would be shifts from private auto and bus, as well as new trips made as a result of the availability of rail service.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.11	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	If we are interpreting this correctly, MassDOT is stating that as riders shift from an existing line to the proposed new line, other riders will take their place on the existing lines. The SDEIS/SDEIR should provide some evidence to support this contention.	See response to comment L-061.10. The modeling is based on future demographic projections, transit service characteristics and other factors. It is not automatically assumed new riders would replace riders shifting to the new line. The CTPS modeling takes a comprehensive look at the total transit system ridership with and without the project.
L-061.12	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	There are four ways that potential riders can get to the train station: they can drive, if there is ample parking; they can get dropped off and picked up again in the evening, they can walk or ride their bikes, or they can take some other form of transportation, like feeder buses. It appears that, in some cases, ridership from a particular station is unreasonable given parking availability, or ability to walk to the station. The SDEIS/SDEIR should calculate ridership in two ways: 1) with feeder buses, and projected land use (e.g., TODs), only if the costs of those changes are included in the costs of the project; or 2) ridership that would occur using existing land use and available parking. In other words, the DEIS/DEIR should not assume dozens of people or more will be walking to a rural train station with little housing around it.	<p>Ridership was estimated using the CTPS regional transportation model, the best available tool for this purpose available for this project.</p> <p>Parking requirements for each station were determined based on anticipated ridership, and are not expected to constrain ridership. The revised ridership totals take into account ridership impacts as a result of feeder bus service (See Appendix 4.1-H).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.13	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The SDEIS/SDEIR should provide information on the number of manufacturing and health care/social assistance jobs available in Boston for these Fall River and New Bedford workers. This analysis should also explore the pay for these jobs, and whether the cost of the commute would be affordable.</p> <p>In a recent article entitled Job accessibility and journey to work: the case of Boston Metropolitan area, the author states: "...job matching is one of the important factors determining job accessibility since physical proximity to opportunities means nothing if workers nearby are not qualified for the available job opportunities" (See Job accessibility and journey to work: the case of Boston Metropolitan area, <a href="http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/33691">http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/33691</a>, Chung, Jee-seong, MIT, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering., 2005, p. 57). This author also states, "cities and towns around Route 128 contain 20 to 25% of all office space in the Boston metropolitan area. About 35 to 40% of office space is located in downtown Boston with the remainder scattered throughout the metropolitan area" (Id., at 82). The SDEIS/SDEIR must make an attempt to show where the jobs exist, what type of jobs they are, and whether they are appropriate and available for the people in the South Coast study area (whatever than may be). As Chung cautions:</p> <p>...using conventional methods, job accessibility by transit is determined using the total number of jobs in a zone, assuming that all jobs in a zone can be reached by transit users if the zone can be reached by transit. This assumption leads often to the overestimation of transit job accessibility by over-counting the number of jobs accessible by transit, resulting in the overestimation of transit ridership ....While residents of a neighborhood might be closer to many job opportunities, if they do not have the skills or education to qualify for those jobs, then they are hardly candidates for employment opportunities. Therefore, job accessibility indicators need to incorporate occupational matching (Id. at</p>	<p>There is demand for transportation between Fall River and New Bedford under existing conditions as demonstrated by the U.S. Census Journey to Work data and existence of local bus service. The future demand for the rail alternatives was appropriately estimated using the CTPS regional model. The modeling does not assume that all the commuters using the service would be existing residents of Fall River or New Bedford, travel by transit or auto to stations from other areas is included.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		87-88).	
L-061.14	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The MEPA Certificate that issued in 2009 stated:</p> <p>Many commenters have questioned the need for the project as well as the ridership demand estimate of 8,000 daily work trips for the South Coast region presented in the ENF (which is based on the U.S. Census 2000 Journey to Work data). Some commenters believe the number of trips is underestimated, others believe it to be excessive. EOT should consider the comments from the municipalities, regional planning agencies and others regarding the inputs to the ridership model. I expect the analysis in the DEIR to resolve many of the outstanding questions and provide well documented, valid projections of ridership to support the analysis of impacts and mitigation, and the selection of alternatives (See <a href="http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/ENF_Secretary_Certificate.pdf">http://www.southcoastrail.com/downloads/ENF_Secretary_Certificate.pdf</a>).</p> <p>The Secretary explicitly asked that the outstanding questions regarding ridership be answered in the DEIR; if anything, more questions have arisen. Moreover, the ridership projections are neither valid nor well-documented.</p>	The comment does not identify any specific deficiency with the ridership projections. The inputs to the ridership modeling are explained in Chapter 3 and 4.1 and associated appendices.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.15	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>In order to determine the travel times, the DEIS/DEIR examined arrival time statistics from 2008 (see p. 3-132), and estimated future travel times. However, MBTA's website has statistics for the percentage of trains on time each month (See <a href="http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/scorecard/">http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/scorecard/</a>). MBTA states that Stoughton trains' on-time performance was 82% in Feb. 2011, and 10+ minutes late 13% of the time. The MBTA provides similar performance times throughout previous months and years, all more recent than the 2008 data used in the DEIS/DEIR. These data are readily available, and PEER is puzzled as to why the DEIS/DEIR cites data from 3 years ago rather than using current data. Moreover, if the Stoughton trains are currently more than 10 minutes late 13% of the time now, PEER does not understand how MassDOT can be so certain that the estimated travel times of 76 and 85 minutes for the electric and diesel options, respectively, can be accurate. Travel times for all alternatives should reflect a range of times, using recent data for on-time performance. If 10+ minutes are added to the Stoughton diesel travel time, it would take longer to use the commuter rail than to drive.</p>	An updated evaluation of on-time performance and reliability is discussed in Section 4.2.3 of the Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum (FEIS/FEIR Appendix 3.1-E).
L-061.16	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Further, p. 3-42 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>Rail travel times for the Attleboro and Stoughton/Whittenton Alternatives, which include dwell times at the stations, were calculated for the 2030 operation and reflect future improvements and service modifications to the rail corridors.</p> <p>The SDEIS/SDEIR should disclose what these "future improvements" and "service modifications" are, and the associated costs of these improvements. The SDEIS/SDEIR should also disclose the travel times without these future improvements and service modifications.</p>	The text refers to the transit service associated with the alternatives themselves, as described in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 also includes the cost estimates for the alternatives.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.17	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Finally, PEER would like to see additional information as to why the Rapid Bus suddenly got so much slower in its travel time. MassDOT alluded to future traffic at one of the Task Force meetings as to why the bus is suddenly slower than all the train options, but we believe that the SDEIS/SDEIR should reveal these data. Chung states that, "Travel time is considered to be one of the decisive factors determining people's mode choice" (p. 64). If the travel times in the DEIS/DEIR are not accurate, then neither are the ridership figures.	Infrastructure requirements are described in Section 3.1 of the Modified Rapid Bus Alternative Technical Memorandum (Appendix 3.1-E). Travel time improvements are described in Section 4.1.2.
L-061.18	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Cost. PEER believes that the costs of the project are highly underestimated. First, we believe there are items missing from the capital cost estimate. By providing a lump sum figure for infrastructure costs, it is impossible to judge whether these costs are accurate. The SDEIS/DEIR should break out the separate costs for track, signals, stations, parking lots, road and intersection improvements, and maintenance facilities. Only with this information can anyone evaluate the accuracy of the cost estimates. An accurate capital cost figure is critical because this figure is used to calculate cost per rider, and to compare alternatives. If the capital cost of the project given in the DEIS/DEIR is inaccurate, then all of the alternatives analyses and comparisons are also inaccurate.	Capital cost estimates for the South Cost Rail project were based on specific items needed to construct the project including, but not limited to, station areas, their acquisitions, track improvements, layover facilities, electrification structures and the Hockomock Trestle. In addition to infrastructure investments, and as is common in estimates for infrastructure, the cost estimate included a contingency for mitigation items beyond the trestle and potential unknowns.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.19	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Second, PEER believes that the upgrades to South Station must be taken into account as part of the costs of this project. Although the entire commuter rail system will benefit from the South Station upgrades, they should not be treated as an independent project. Since the proposed South Coast Rail project relies on the South Station upgrade, and since the Commonwealth must somehow find the money to conduct the upgrade, leaving this cost out of the project underestimates the true cost of the South Coast Rail project.	As described in the South Station Expansion ENF and federal funding application, the increase in South Station capacity and the midday layover facility is needed for both existing and future operations of both Amtrak and MBTA. Expansion of South Station has independent utility (40 CFR 1508.25(a)) from the South Coast Rail Project because, while it would be required to accommodate any of the commuter rail alternatives of the South Coast Rail project, the need for expansion of South Station capacity exists without the South Coast Rail project and the expansion of South Station would be constructed absent the construction of other projects in the project area. The expansion of South Station will be subject to its own environmental review process, which is ongoing.
L-061.20	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Third, we do not see where the costs associated with the commuter rail maintenance facility are in the cost estimate for the project. Our understanding is that both the maintenance facility and the track leading to this facility must be upgraded in order to support the proposed project, if the project is going to be electrified. Therefore, this cost should be included.	The infrastructure and maintenance needs of a new electrified system were included in the capital and O&M estimates for the project. These estimates are shown in Chapter 3, Alternatives.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.21	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Fourth, pp. 3-60 to 3-62 of the DEIS/DEIR discuss how a feeder bus service to the train stations is “envisioned by MassDOT to connect the urbanized communities in the study area to the South Coast stations.” The DEIS/DEIR goes on to state:</p> <p>Since the commuter rail system would primarily serve work commuters traveling to downtown Boston, priority would be given to improving access for residents to suburban stations...Feeder bus service would provide a direct connection to significant nearby destinations or origins including downtowns, universities, government centers, hospitals and higher density residential developments...All public transportation systems would reflect and incorporate the South Coast Rail service.</p> <p>Although the DEIS/DEIR states that “[p]reference would be given to rerouting existing services over providing new services where possible,” there are undoubtedly costs associated with these feeder buses, and for new stations, feeder buses could not simply be rerouted. The SDEIS/SDEIR must include the costs of these feeder buses, bus drivers, fuel, storage and maintenance facilities, and stops into the cost of the project.</p>	<p>Feeder buses (operated by local transit agencies) are not part of the project and are not within the control of MassDOT or USACE. Therefore, although MassDOT has made recommendations for how feeder bus service could be provided (Appendix 3.2-A), the implementation of such service would be dependent on the local transit agencies and would not be funded as part of the project. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to include the feeder bus costs in the project cost estimate. Similarly, MassDOT would not receive revenue from the additional ridership on local bus services encouraged by the South Coast Rail project.</p>
L-061.22	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Fifth, PEER is concerned that the inflation rate used in the cost figures is inaccurate. Table 3.2-26 on page 3-94 of the DEIS/DEIR states that the cost is in 2009 dollars, and that “escalation was calculated at 3.25% per year per FTA criteria.” PEER believes that construction costs have exceeded standard inflation rate. For example, the costs of concrete, steel, fuel and electricity have increased faster than the inflation rate. Therefore, the escalation rate used by MassDOT is inadequate, and the costs of the project should be altered accordingly.</p>	<p>Capital cost estimates have been updated in the FEIS/FEIR to represent current dollars.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.23	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Sixth, the cost estimates assume that construction on this project will begin approximately one year from now. This is inconceivable. MassDOT should explain how it can possibly believe that engineering will be complete, and all permits will be obtained and the project will be ready for construction in one year. There will likely be legal challenges to the project as well, which would delay any construction. Even if we assume that the cost of the proposed project is \$1.8 billion (which, as we have already explained, is a serious underestimate), the yearly inflation will be astronomical.	Capital cost estimates have been updated in the FEIS/FEIR to represent current dollars. Constructing the project is still expected to take 4.5 years for the Stoughton Electric Alternative and would begin after all the project permits were received. Start of construction has not yet been identified.
L-061.24	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Seventh, the costs of wetland mitigation are not included in this project at all. Given the proposed impacts to wetlands, these mitigation costs will likely be high, and must be added to the project. Moreover, if MassDOT continues to claim benefits from the Corridor Plan, it must explain where the money will come from to pay for preservation of Priority protection Areas. Unless MassDOT has a way to pay for this mitigation, it should not assume that it is going to happen.	<p>Overall project mitigation costs have been updated and are included in the cost estimate presented in Table 3.2-22. The cost estimate includes projected environmental resource mitigation costs consistent with the FTA-approved methodology. Comparative costs of mitigation among the alternatives presented in the DEIS/DEIR were not a discriminating factor in our determination that the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives are not practicable. See also the response to Comment No. L-068.37.</p> <p>MassDOT is not funding land acquisition in the priority protection areas. The implementation of the Corridor Plan will be the responsibility of local governments. Section 5.5 provides MassDOT's monitoring and reporting plan to track the success of implementation of the Corridor Plan.</p>
L-061.25	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Finally, and most importantly, there is absolutely no mention of where the money will come from to build this project. Although the Commonwealth and the nation seem to be recovering slowly from the recession, it is completely unclear as to where the Commonwealth will get the billions of dollars necessary to construct this project. Because the source of funding may itself have impacts relevant to the Corps' public interest review (e.g., taxes taken from areas around new municipal stations, gas taxes, etc.), the source of funding must be revealed.	Funding issues are beyond the scope of the issues required to be addressed in an EIS/EIR. The impacts of funding decisions (deciding to fund one project over another) are not an element of USACE's public interest determination.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.26	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	A realistic cost estimate is necessary in order to accurately calculate cost per rider, cost per Vehicle Mile Traveled (VMT) reduction, and for a true comparison of alternatives.	A realistic cost estimate was provided, see responses to comments L-061.18 to L-061.25.
L-061.27	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis is inaccurate. There appear to be many flaws associated with the VMT analysis, which goes to the heart of the alleged greenhouse gas benefits.</p> <p>First, on p. 4.1-7, the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>CTPS conducted 2030 Build model runs for each alternative by including the new bus or rail service as a travel option. The model was used to quantify the number of vehicle trips diverted from regional roadways to local roadways because of drivers and riders who change mode from passenger car to transit service. Trip generation for each station was based on projected park-and-ride (i.e., driving &amp; parking at the station) and drop-off (i.e., being dropped off or picked up by another driver) ridership. The analyses of impacts on traffic operations are based on the peak hour park-and-ride and drop-off ridership projections for each station. The park-and-ride ridership was divided by a vehicle occupancy rate (VOR) of 1.05 to calculate the number of park-and-ride vehicles entering and exiting the stations. Two vehicle trips were assumed for each drop-off rider: one entering and one exiting the proposed station.</p> <p>When someone is dropped off at a station, there are two vehicle trips each morning: one dropping the person off, then the vehicle returning home or continuing on somewhere else. This analysis fails to include how the person gets home from the train station at night. It seems to PEER that when someone is dropped off at a train station to go to work, that person also needs to get picked up every evening, resulting in four vehicle trips, not two.</p>	Drop-off riders were accounted for as one trip to the station and one trip from the station. These trips typically occur in the morning peak period and were, therefore, represented in the morning. Similarly, the pick-up riders were accounted for as one trip to the station and one leaving the station for the evening peak period as these trips typically occur on a return trip from work. Both the drop-off and the pick-up trips were, therefore, represented in the VMT analysis.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.28	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Impacts associated with using the line for freight must be revealed. The DEIS/DEIR gives conflicting information as to whether freight will be carried on this line, and if so, the impacts of such freight.	Freight services is anticipated to continue on the track segments where freight is currently provided (on the Stoughton Line north of Stoughton Station, on the Attleboro Secondary, on the Stoughton Line in Taunton between Longmeadow Road and Weir Junction, and on the New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary south of Weir Junction). No future freight service is currently planned or anticipated on the currently out-of-service Whittenton Branch or Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road.
L-061.29	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The SDEIS/SDEIR must reveal whether freight is going to use the line, and if so, the frequency, types of freight, and impacts. Merely stating that future freight service would have to undergo MEPA review is totally inadequate for purposes of this analysis. But for the proposed new line, freight could not run through this location. If freight is anticipated as reasonably foreseeable activity, the impacts must be revealed in order to assess cumulative impacts to the resources, including public drinking water.	See response to comment L-061.28. The project is not changing freight service or providing freight service to areas it does not exist currently. Therefore, impacts related to freight service did not need to be addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.30	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The impacts associated with MassDOT’s preferred alternative are severely understated. The DEIS/DEIR is disingenuous at best about the impacts associated with its preferred alternative. Page 3-145 of the DEIS/DEIR states that the alternatives are compared “based on five adverse environmental impacts:” 1) The amount of permanent wetland loss (in acres) and wetland loss in ACECs; 2) The number of acres of protected open space that would be directly impacted, acres of land acquisition and municipal tax loss; 3) The number of acres of protected public water supply lands (active and inactive Mapped Wellhead Zone 1) that would be directly impacted; 4) The amount of noise impacts; and 5) The number of acres of mapped Priority Habitat (state-listed rare species) that would be lost (edge and interior habitat). As PEER and other groups have been saying for years, MassDOT must look beyond the direct impacts. PEER cannot count the number of times that we cautioned that even if direct impacts are low, indirect impacts may be astronomical.</p>	<p>Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts were all evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR. The text quoted in the comment refers to a portion of the alternatives analysis in chapter 3 where certain key indicators were compared. This comparison was not intended to be a comprehensive summary of all the impacts considered in the environmental review process.</p>
L-061.31	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>In fact, MassDOT’s own Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) analysis, buried in the Appendices, illustrates this nicely. On page 7 of the CAPS analysis, it states:</p> <p>Overall the two routes through the Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity...</p> <p>As we have been saying since the beginning, the fragmentation impacts of the Hockomock Swamp are extremely high. So, although the alleged direct impacts associated with the Stoughton Alternative appear lower than some of the other alternatives, this does not mean that the Stoughton Alternative is the LEDPA.</p>	<p>The CAPS analysis was discussed in Chapter 4.14 of the DEIS and of this FEIS. It was not presented only in appendices. The rationale for the LEDPA is addressed in Section 3.4.</p>
L-061.32	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>PEER also believes that the DEIS/DEIR downplays the effects of clearing a 40 to 100 foot swath through the Hockomock canopy.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 of the FEIS/FEIR clarifies that the canopy gap in the Hockomock Swamp would be 30 feet wide.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.33	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	First, PEER strongly disagrees with the characterization that a 40 to 100 foot cut through the center of the Hockomock Swamp, and then construction of an active rail line, is “temporary in nature.” Second, PEER was under the impression that the canopy would not be allowed to close; rather, that the vegetation had to be kept clear of the rail line, particularly if it were electric. The SDEIS/SDEIR should clarify what the Commonwealth plans to do with regard to the vegetative growth next to the line. If indeed the canopy is allowed to grow back, the SDEIS/SDEIR should disclose how long this will take to reach pre-construction conditions, if ever.	Chapter 4.14 of the FEIS/FEIR clarifies that the canopy gap in the Hockomock Swamp would be 30 feet wide. Chapter 4.14, section on Vegetation Management, provides information on construction and maintenance requirements. Areas cleared for construction would be retained free of vegetation, where these areas are within the trackbed, drainage ditches, or power substations. Areas that were cleared for grading, outside of the tracked, would be seeded and allowed to revegetate. Revegetation is anticipated over one growing season.
L-061.34	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	PEER would also like to direct MassDOT and the Corps to read the article Overview of Transportation Impacts on Wildlife Movement and Populations (see Jackson, S.D. 2000. Overview of Transportation Impacts on Wildlife Movement and Populations. Pp. 7-20 In Messmer, T.A. and B. West, (eds) Wildlife and Highways: Seeking Solutions to an Ecological and Socio-economic Dilemma. The Wildlife Society). In particular, we would like to draw your attention to page 3, which states, “As long linear features on the landscape, railways, roads and highways have impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat that are disproportionate to the area of land that they occupy” (see also Effect of rail on wildlife, <a href="http://www.wildlandscpr.org/node/221">http://www.wildlandscpr.org/node/221</a> ). PEER is disturbed that the DEIS/DEIR cites to one study that is almost 20 years old to support the Commonwealth’s contention that the impacts through the Hockomock will be minimal. This is certainly contrary to using the best science available, and misleading to the reader.	Additional reference studies concerning habitat fragmentation and noise effects on wildlife are discussed in Chapter 4.14.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.35	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The DEIS/DEIR is also misleading in other places. For example, Page 4.14-100 states:</p> <p>The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives would reduce connectivity in the Hockomock Swamp with a gradient ranging from major impacts close to the rail line to negligible impacts at greater distances, compared to the existing connectedness (Figure 4.14-27). Without a trestle (Figure 4.14-28), these alternatives would result in substantial losses in connectivity in the Hockomock Swamp east of the rail line, between the Raynham dog track and Foundry Street and between the rail line and Route 138, and in some areas west of the rail line. Moderate impacts would extend through much of the Hockomock, including areas east of Route 138. These impacts would be substantially reduced by the trestle (Figure 4.14-29), with major losses restricted to a smaller area east of the rail line and north of the dog track. Impacts would also extend over a smaller area than the “no-trestle” option (emphasis added).</p> <p>However, when you examine Figure 4.14-29 (see below), you can see that contrary to the description in the DEIS/DEIR, the loss of connectedness is major east of the rail line, not moderate. The SDEIS/SDEIR should include the figures next to the text, and describe them accurately.</p>	<p>The text in question was reviewed and determined to be accurate. It is recognized that it is difficult to distinguish moderate and major impacts on the figures.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.36	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Page 1-35 of DEIS/DEIR states that:</p> <p>Losses of wetland habitat are similar for the Rapid Bus and Attleboro Alternatives (20.3 to 21.5 acres), and they would result in the largest impacts to vernal pool wetland habitat (2.3 to 5.4 acres). The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives would have less wetland loss (10.3 to 11.9 acres), and the least impacts to vernal pool wetland habitat (1.0 to 1.8 acres).</p> <p>However, again, MassDOT misrepresents the true impacts by not taking into account the 55+ acres of supporting vernal pool upland habitat that would be lost (see Table 4.14-28). The SDEIS/SDEIR should present direct and indirect impacts together, in order to allow the reader to properly assess the true impacts associated with each alternative.</p>	The Rapid Bus and Attleboro Alternatives are no longer under consideration because they are not practicable, see Chapter 3. The presentation of direct and indirect impacts was not misleading.
L-061.37	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Another example of where the DEIS/DEIR is disingenuous is on page 4.15-47, which states:</p> <p>Reconstruction of the track of the former Stoughton line would result in habitat loss which could lead to habitat fragmentation and loss of genetic diversity. However, the loss of a small percentage of habitat is not considered significant given the large area of suitable habitat for these species in, and in the vicinity of, the project area (emphasis added).</p> <p>The qualifiers used in statements such as these appear to be an attempt to minimize the known impacts of the preferred alternative. As stated above, the CAPS analysis found that the Stoughton routes would result in the “greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity” of all the alternatives. Stating things like habitat fragmentation “could” result, but is not considered significant makes a mockery of ecology and wildlife biology.</p>	The FEIS/FEIR description of habitat fragmentation impacts has been revised as follows. The reconstructed rail infrastructure, in locations where no tracks or ties currently exist, would prevent or impede the movement of Blanding’s or eastern box turtles across the ROW. This habitat fragmentation could lead to the loss of genetic diversity and decrease in population size, potentially resulting in the local extirpation of some small populations. Fragmentation of habitat for blue-spotted salamanders could potentially have similar results, although the rail would constitute a barrier to salamander movement for only 1,500 linear feet at the northern edge of the Hockomock Swamp population area and would not impede movement of salamanders for the remaining 7,000 linear feet of the trestle. No habitat fragmentation is anticipated for state-listed insect species which primarily occur along the active freight rail lines. The trestle would be constructed between south of Foundry Street and north of Raynham Park station site.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.38	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The DEIS/DEIR also downplays water quality impacts. Page 4.14-61 states, “[t]he rail or highway alternatives are not anticipated to generate non-point source discharges of pollutants to surface waters, and therefore are not considered to have an adverse impact on aquatic communities.” However, page 4.17-34 states, “Most potential rail contaminants are due to the train traffic on the rails, which may result in hazardous contamination from spills, drips, or exhaust.” PEER has provided its water quality analysis of vernal pools along an active rail line compared to the vernal pools in the Hockomock several times. This analysis demonstrates that non-point source discharges from rail lines do, in fact, significantly affect water quality of vernal pools. A bald statement that the impacts do not occur is not sufficient to make scientific studies disappear. The SDEIS/SDEIR must investigate fully the impacts of rail on the water quality of vernal pools and other waters.</p>	<p>According to the most recent report (2009) available for research conducted in conjunction with the Greenbush Rail Line project, no difference has been observed in water quality data from sites taken within the vicinity of active rail when compared to water quality data for comparable water resources not near an active rail line.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.39	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Page 4.14-84 of the DEIS states that the canopy gap for the length of the trestle will be 40', but later on that same page it says the canopy gap will be 40 - 80' for a single track, including through some Atlantic White Cedar swamp, and 60 - 100' for a double track.	The clearing width through the Hockomock Swamp is 30 feet and this point has been clarified in the FEIS/FEIR. The clearing width is determined by the amount of land needed to construct the proposed rail infrastructure (the width of ground disturbance). In areas where the ROW will be double-tracked, and a complete railbed reconstruction with parallel drainage ditches is required, the width would be the greatest (up to 80 ft). In areas of single track, with grading and drainage, a 40-foot wide construction zone is adequate. Through the Hockomock Trestle section, and in Pine Swamp, this width has been minimized to reduce impacts to the most sensitive resources. In the Hockomock, this is simply the width of the trestle plus a narrow construction allowance. In Pine Swamp, as shown in the design cross-sections, the width has been minimized through special side-slope treatments. In both cases, as the railbed is elevated, no drainage ditches are necessary. This allows the design to minimize the width of the construction zone but would not create future hardship for maintenance. It is not practicable to use the same cross-sections along the remaining track sections, as this narrow 30-foot work area cannot accommodate two tracks or even one track with drainage.
L-061.40	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Again, the impacts to the Hockomock should be clear and unambiguous, and this includes a specific width of clearing. Moreover, statements such as “No adverse effects are anticipated...” are unscientific, counterintuitive, and indicate a clear bias. These statements should be removed from this supposedly factual document.	The EIS/EIR uses scientific information and facts, but still requires professional judgment to reach conclusions.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.41	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The trestle through the Hockomock is a bridge, and cannot be built without substantially more impacts than what is revealed in the DEIS/DEIR. The MBTA defines a bridge as "any structure with total bridge length (sum of all spans) greater than 20 feet" (<a href="http://www.mbta.com/uploadedfiles/Documents/Schedules_and_Maps/Commuter_Rail/FINAL%20031009_Vol1Sec3_Bridges_March-2009.pdf">http://www.mbta.com/uploadedfiles/Documents/Schedules_and_Maps/Commuter_Rail/FINAL%20031009_Vol1Sec3_Bridges_March-2009.pdf</a>). The trestle, is therefore a bridge. In fact, Page 3-74 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>By far the largest new bridge would be the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp with about 284 spans. It would be about 8500 feet long and 24 feet wide at the level of the bridge deck, with a minimum 3 feet clearance above grade and incidental excavations to allow large mammal passage. Figure 3.2-19 shows the typical cross section of the trestle through the Hockomock Swamp.</p> <p>Page 3.2 of the MBTA document shows a diagram of a "one track of two rails" of 56.2' for each rail track, yet the figures in the DEIS/DEIR show the single track trestle through the Hockomock as either 20' (Figure 3.2-19) or 28' (figure 4.15-9) wide. MassDOT should explain how MBTA design standards for bridges require 56.2', yet the bridge structure through the Hockomock will only be 20' to 28'. The SDEIS/SDEIR must include a design of the trestle, based on an actual survey, to adequately depict impacts to the Hockomock Swamp. The not to scale drawings included in the DEIS/DEIR are completely inadequate.</p>	<p>Additional information on the design of the Hockomock Trestle is presented in Appendix 3.2-C. The level of design detail currently available is appropriate to assessing impacts in the EIS/EIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.42	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	PEER also does not understand how the proposed trestle through the Hockomock could be built and/or maintained without a much wider right-of-way, or without access roads leading into the wetland. The DEIS/DEIR describes the construction sequence but does not discuss how the heavy equipment will get into the swamp, how it will operate within the right-of-way, and how this trestle will be maintained once it is built. It is inconceivable that the trestle would not require some kind of access to it, and the impacts associated with this access must be disclosed.	Additional information on the construction and maintenance of the Hockomock Trestle is presented in Appendix 3.2-C.
L-061.43	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The DEIS/DEIR also does not appear to disclose the width of the right-of-way through the Hockomock or in other locations. PEER contacted Kristina Egan of MassDOT, and was told that the right-of-way through the Hockomock was 60'. That information should be included in the SDEIS/SDEIR, and a survey should be done to ensure that the right-of-way is consistent in width throughout the area. According to the DEIS/DEIR, the width of the right-of-way varies: page 3-102 states, "The construction method would be kept consistent throughout the corridor, even in sections where the right-of-way and embankment widens." However, the specific width, varying or not, is nowhere to be found in the DEIS/DEIR.	The existing right-of-way through the Hockomock Swamp is typically 66 feet wide, and all work for the trestle would be accomplished within the right-of-way. Access for constructing the trestle would be from the north at Foundry Street and from the south at Racetrack Crossing. Constructing the trestle would require equipment working at grade within the right-of-way as the piles are installed. Currently, the right-of-way is used by pedestrians, bicyclists, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders; currently these uses are neither sanctioned nor prohibited by MBTA. However, they would not be allowed when the railroad (including the trestle) is being constructed and subsequently operated.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.44	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>According to the EEA Policy, Article 97 land disposition cannot occur unless “exceptional circumstances” exist. In order for a determination of "exceptional circumstances" to be made, the following conditions, among others, must be met: 1) no feasible and substantially equivalent alternatives exist and 2) The disposition of the subject parcel and its proposed use do not destroy or threaten a unique or significant resource. MassDOT claims that because the area proposed to be converted “represents a very small proportion of the overall protected area,” no unique or significant resources would be threatened (see page 4.10-60). PEER disagrees. Article 97 should be taken very seriously, and public land should not be given away lightly. Table 4.2-9 of the DEIS/DEIR shows 2.57 acres of public land being taken, in a total of 8 parcels. PEER believes that construction of the rail through the Hockomock would involve even more public land being taken from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW). We do not believe that the trestle can be constructed within the confines of the right-of-way; nor do we believe that the trestle can be maintained without additional impacts to DFW land. As such, we believe that the SDEIS/SDEIR should more accurately reflect both the amount and the impact of such takings, and the likelihood that the legislature would approve such a taking, given the enormous cost of this project.</p>	<p>Post-DEIS design refinements have reduced Article 97 land impacts. Total impacts to Article 97 lands would be 0.16 acres, none of which would be located in the Hockomock Swamp (see Chapter 4.10).</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.45	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Implementation of the Corridor Plan is highly speculative and will cost additional monies that are not disclosed. Page 4.3-24 of the DEIS/DEIR states that the Corridor Plan provides “an opportunity to organize new growth around stations and direct it away from sensitive areas of ecological value.” Unfortunately, the DEIS/DEIR does not disclose either the source of funding or the legal mechanisms to accomplish this. In fact, pages 4.3-56 and 57 concede that, “Implementation of Smart Growth measures, as proposed by MassDOT, is subject to local decision making and may thus vary among communities targeted for Smart Growth...” Despite this uncertainty, the DEIS/DEIR proceeds to assume that “conservatively established smart growth goals would be achieved by the Build Year and development would be distributed accordingly. Actual development with the implementation of Smart Growth measures may vary from this both on local and regional, aggregated basis. The impact analysis assumed a full implementation and realization of development according to the Smart Growth Plan, so that its impacts could be assessed relative to those without Smart Growth measures.”</p>	<p>Implementation of the Corridor Plan is discussed in Section 5.5. The South Coast Rail project does not involve funding or legal mechanisms to require local governments to implement the Corridor Plan. The evaluation of Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 in Chapter 5 provides appropriate bounds for the indirect and cumulative impact analysis--from business as usual to full implementation of smart growth measures.</p>
L-061.46	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Even the Secretary’s 2009 MEPA certificate requested additional information:</p> <p>The DEIR should include an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project for each alternative, to fully understand the overall costs and rationale for selection of alternatives. The DEIR should address how the proposed rail and/or bus routes, and associated Land Use and Economic Development Corridor Plan will be financed.</p> <p>It is unrealistic – not to mention deceitful - to assume that these Smart Growth measures will be implemented. The SDEIS/SDEIR must remove these assumptions in all of its analyses unless and until both a funding mechanism and legal mechanisms are developed and assured.</p>	<p>Costs of implementing smart growth measures are not part of the project. See Section 5.5 for the Corridor Plan monitoring and reporting criteria. The EIS/EIR does not assume the Corridor Plan will be implemented-- impacts with and without implementation are evaluated to provide full disclosure to local decision makers of the environmental benefits of smart growth development patterns.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.47	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The mitigation discussion is wholly inadequate. As we stated above, mitigation costs are not taken into account in the costs of this project. However, the mitigation discussion, such as it is, is flawed in other ways as well. Specifically, the mitigation does not comply with the requests in the 2009 MEPA certificate. The Secretary stated:</p> <p>The DEIR should also include a comprehensive mitigation plan for any unavoidable impacts, explain why these impacts are unavoidable, and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent feasible. The mitigation plan should address permanent and temporary impacts and construction-related impacts...EOT should consult with MassDEP to discuss any concerns regarding proposed wetlands mitigation sites and to discuss appropriate protective measures and mitigation for vernal pools....The DEIR should describe proposed wetlands mitigation areas and identify locations on maps and site plans. As noted in the MassDEP comment letter, there is flexibility within the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. The DEIR should describe how mitigation sites will be designed to preserve critical functions such as flood storage volume at each locality. The DEIR should discuss ownership of the sites and identify any proposed to be taken by eminent domain. The DEIR should provide details on any replication proposed including the timeframe anticipated and the methods proposed to achieve successful replication. The DEIR should include a monitoring and contingency plan to ensure success of mitigation. The ENF indicates that EOT will rely on compensatory wetland mitigation areas referenced in the 2002 New Bedford Fall River Commuter Rail FEIR, which identified more than 50 acres of compensatory wetlands. The DEIR should use the FEIR Certificate as a starting point for developing wetlands mitigation commitments, as recommended by MassDEP, and should specifically identify the proposed mitigation measures and ratios associated with each of the resource areas.</p>	<p>Overall project mitigation costs have been updated and are included in the cost estimate presented in Table 3.2-22. The cost estimate includes projected environmental resource mitigation costs consistent with the FTA-approved methodology. Comparative costs of mitigation among the alternatives presented in the DEIS/DEIR were not a discriminating factor in our determination that the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives are not practicable. See also the response to Comment No. L-068.37. Mitigation information has been refined for the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>The DEIS/DEIR did not contain maps, locations of mitigation sites, or costs associated with mitigation. Did MassDOT confer with MassDEP as requested? If so, that information should be provided in the SDEIS/SDEIR. The discussion of mitigation in the DEIS/DEIR was so minimal, PEER is unclear how MassDOT even proposes to mitigate for the massive impacts proposed, and how it will pay for such mitigation. All of this information is necessary for the resource agencies to make an informed decision on permitting.</p>	
L-061.48	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Alleged economic benefits of the proposed train are unsubstantiated. The DEIS/DEIR claims that the proposed project will bring all sorts of wonderful economic benefits to the South Coast region (whatever that may be), and help the cities of Fall River and New Bedford. These claims are stated baldly, with no substantiation. Moreover, a quick review of other depressed cities, and their unemployment rates before and after the commuter rail arrived in their towns, does not show miraculous economic recoveries. For example, the City of Brockton got the commuter rail in 1997. As you can see from the graph below, Brockton's unemployment rate tracks that of the state of Massachusetts, and does not appear to change with the advent of the rail.</p> <p>Rather than assuming that the commuter rail will bring economic growth and employment to these cities, MassDOT must give us hard evidence that this will happen. The SDEIS/SDEIR should provide analyses of unemployment, education, job skills, language skills, etc., to determine the precise reasons for their economic woes. Simply claiming that the train is the silver bullet is not sufficient to warrant an expenditure of billions of dollars, and allow the destruction of such valuable natural resources.</p>	<p>The comment does not provide a specific criticism of the methodology used to estimate indirect employment impacts in Chapter 5. That multiple factors other than transportation influence economic development is acknowledged, but the analysis incorporated appropriate modeling tools and the input of the regional agencies responsible for population and employment forecasts.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.49	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>The Rapid Bus is the LEDPA. It is abundantly clear to PEER that the Rapid Bus is the LEDPA. Although the ridership analysis and cost analysis are seriously flawed, it is apparent that the Rapid Bus has the least amount of impacts (zero loss of ecological integrity units, according to the CAPS analysis), is much cheaper, and will accomplish the basic project purpose. The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.3-67, "The South Coast Rail Rapid Bus alternative will improve accessibility and mobility in the South Coast region, which in turn will stimulate additional economic activity in the region." Even if the Stoughton alternative were to be declared the LEDPA, it would cause or contribute to significant degradation of waters of the United States, and thus be unpermissible.</p>	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p> <p>The comment provides no evidence, and the Corps has no reason to believe, that the Stoughton (or any other) Alternative would cause or contribute to significant degradation of waters of the United States.</p>
L-061.50	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>Other errata and items that must be addressed in a SDEIS/SDEIR: There are numerous other errata and unaddressed issues in the DEIS/DEIR which should be addressed in a Supplemental document. These include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis of climate change on page 3-142 does not take into account induced traffic.</li> </ul>	<p>Updated analyses of greenhouse gas emissions related to induced growth (including additional VMT) is provided in Chapter 5.</p>
L-061.51	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	<p>In the land use chapter (pages 4.2-1 to 4.2-2), all discussion of noise receptors are human-related. There should be additional mention of the effects of noise on wildlife, interference with breeding calls, etc.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 provides additional information on noise effects on wildlife.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.52	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The blue-spotted salamander population in the Hockomock is likely the pure, diploid population, which is very rare throughout New England. The Commonwealth should investigate this matter, and increase protection of the population if indeed it is the diploid one.	<p>The Corps recognizes the unique habitat provided to blue-spotted salamander (diploid or otherwise) and other sensitive species, and believes that prevention of ATV use within and through vernal pools via the ROW would be facilitated by closing the ROW to those users. Further, the trestle would facilitate unfettered movement of those species across the ROW.</p> <p>NHESP is aware that some investigators believe that the Hockomock Swamp population of the blue-spotted salamander may consist of diploid individuals. NHESP has not indicated that any additional mitigation measures would be needed to meet the MESA Conservation and Management Permit standards for this population.</p>
L-061.53	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Figure 3.2-6 shows that there is a section of privately owned track in Raynham. The SDEIS/SDEIR should disclose how this track will be obtained, and costs of obtaining this track must be disclosed and added to costs of the project.	This cost was included in the parcel acquisition cost estimate for the project.
L-061.54	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Page 4.3-6 uses property tax rates from 2005, showing, for example, that the property tax rate in Easton was \$7.45/\$1,000 Assessed Value. However, in Table 4.3-9 on p. 4.3-19, the DEIS/DEIR says the Easton 2005 tax rate is 10.69. The SDEIS/SDEIR should use consistent, and preferably correct, figures. Moreover, it should use up-to-date figures; the 2012 tax rates are already available for most towns and cities.	The evaluation of socioeconomic effects provided in the DEIS/DEIR Section 4.3, Socioeconomics, used property tax rates from 2009 to compare, on a relative basis, the effects of the Build Alternatives on revenues in each municipality. An update to current tax rates was not conducted for the FEIS as it would not provide useful information for comparison nor an indication of the actual effects when the project is eventually constructed.
L-061.55	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Figure 4.2-5c, Tile 2 has a category for “undeveloped” land and “forest,” yet the undeveloped land is mostly forested. This must be clarified.	The land use classifications provided in the figures were obtained from MassGIS.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.56	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Page 4.3-22 discuss the “permanent impacts” of the proposed project, stating, “The potential long-term social and economic effects of the South Coast Rail alternatives include loss of property tax revenue for municipalities from the acquired privately owned parcels, displacement of existing businesses, residential displacement, fragmentation of neighborhoods or loss of continuity between neighborhoods and job creation related to the operation of the new service.” This section should include noise impacts, quality of life, water quality, drinking water, and safety issues.	Noise impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.6. Water quality and drinking water impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.17. Safety issues related to at-grade crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.1. "Quality of life" was not analyzed as a distinct topic, but the FEIS/FEIR addressed all the components of quality of life, including those listed in the comment and others (visual impacts, traffic etc.).
L-061.57	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Table 4.2-2 on page 4.2-6, states that 40.8% of Easton is "developable." It also states that, "For purposes of this analysis, developable land is defined as large parcels of land that could be developed into new subdivisions or new commercial/industrial properties or could be placed into permanent or limited open space protection." It is unlikely that this amount of land in Easton is indeed developable. The SDEIS/SDEIR should check this and other numbers, and disclose how these percentages were obtained.	The MassGIS dataset used to identify developable land is available at <a href="http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/lus2005.html">http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/it-serv-and-support/application-serv/office-of-geographic-information-massgis/datalayers/lus2005.html</a> . MassDOT considered land currently identified as agricultural, forest, mining, recreation, or undeveloped as potentially developable land area. For uncluttered presentation in the accompanying figures, MassDOT generalized MassGIS' s land use categories as indicated in Appendix 4.2-A.
L-061.58	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Figure 4.15-9 shows a trestle through “Hancock Swamp.” Please clarify where this swamp is.	The label of the figure was corrected for the FEIS/FEIR. A trestle is proposed in the Hockomock Swamp, not Hancock Swamp.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-061.59	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Page 4.3-25 states, "Projections were also made for the four Rhode Island communities that are expected to have commuters utilizing the potential new transit service. Please clarify whether these riders are included in the ridership analysis, and/or the parking availability analysis.	The evaluation of impacts to socioeconomic resources described in DEIS/DEIR Section 4.3, Socioeconomics, does not include a ridership analysis or effects from Rhode Island commuters expected to use the alternatives. The ridership analysis provided in DEIS/DEIR Section 3.1.7, Supplemental Ridership Analysis and Alternatives Dismissed, explains the more detailed evaluation of ridership. Appendix 3.1-C provides the ridership evaluation, and explains that the ridership model encompasses 182 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts as well as 146 external stations around the periphery of the modeled area, including locations in Rhode Island. The parking requirements for each station were based in part on these ridership analyses and, therefore, include Rhode Island commuters.
L-061.60	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	The DEIS/DEIR states that the trestle will be 1.6 miles in length (page 4.10-26), while Appendix 8 says 1.8 miles (page 377, comment N-025-048). Pick one and stick with it.	The trestle would be 8,500 feet long (1.6 miles).
L-061.61	New England Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility	Conclusion. Given the short amount of time to review this massive document, together with its many errors and shortcomings, PEER is positive that we did not cover all the ground we should have. However, it is abundantly clear that a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR needs to be done, with an adequate amount of time given for its review. We are also absolutely sure that the Stoughton Alternative is not the LEDPA, and even if it were, it is not permittable. We urge the Corps and MEPA to do their duties and require adequate and truthful information before they make a determination on this project.	Additional information has been incorporated throughout the FEIS/FEIR, as appropriate.
E-002.01	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Many sources say that the DEIS is out and the clock has started ticking on the comment period. Would you please send me three hard copies of the report so that I can forward it to our volunteer reviewers.	The electronic versions of the DEIS/DEIR were made available in Adobe Acrobat (a standard file format) via DVD and internet download and as a printed version at local libraries and other locations.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-008.01	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Therefore, I am requesting that the review period be extended further to an additional 60 days. I believe that other NGOs will have a similar difficulty meeting the May 27th deadline for review and meaningful comments also.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-071.01	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	The DEIS/R fails to provide an adequate assessment of the impacts of the project to wetlands, streams, rare species and biodiversity, especially in the Hockomock and Pine Swamps and detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts. This information is necessary to identify the “least environmentally damaging practicable alternative” as required under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act and to determine compliance with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWPA), Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and other applicable statutes and regulations. We respectfully request the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and the Army Corps of Engineers to require preparation of a Supplemental DEIS/R (SDEIS/R) to provide this information.	A supplemental EIS/EIR was not required. Additional information on mitigation is provided in this FEIS/FEIR.
L-071.02	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	<p>The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate information regarding these and other impacts. Examples of missing information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Plans showing field delineations of all wetland resource boundaries, streams and the footprint of all work. This information is needed to determine whether the predicted wetland losses associated with the Stoughton alternatives are accurate.</li> </ul>	Detailed wetland plans are available on request from MassDOT or USACE.
L-071.03	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Soil analysis for the portion of the right-of-way (ROW) in the Hockomock Swamp where the proposed trestle will be constructed to demonstrate ability of the soil to support the footings of the trestle.	See Appendix 3.2-C, Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum.
L-071.04	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Information on how access to rail lines for maintenance and emergencies will be provided in sensitive areas where single tracking is proposed and especially for the trestle area.	See Appendix 3.2-C, Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-071.05	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	A plan showing the proposed relocated channel of the perennial stream that currently flows on the ROW in the Hockomock Swamp, and clarification of whether the relocation will involve alteration of existing wetlands.	Relocation of the stream as a mitigation measure is no longer proposed, based on the interagency coordination process. See Chapter 4.16.
L-071.06	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	<p>The DEIS/R also fails to provide detailed mitigation plans that were specifically required in the MEPA Certificate on the Environmental Notification Form for this project. These requirements included:</p> <p>Wetlands (page 27 of MEPA Certificate): The DEIR should include a detailed description of measures to avoid and minimize wetland impacts for each of the alternatives. The DEIR should also include a comprehensive mitigation plan for any unavoidable impacts, explain why these impacts are unavoidable, and demonstrate how impacts will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent feasible. The mitigation plan should address permanent and temporary impacts and construction-related impacts...The DEIR should describe proposed wetlands mitigation areas and identify locations on maps and site plans. As noted in the MassDEP comment letter, there is flexibility within the variance process to consolidate some mitigation into more centralized areas rather than individual mitigation sites at each impact location. The DEIR should describe how mitigation sites will be designed to preserve critical local functions such as flood storage volume at each locality. The DEIR should discuss ownership of the sites and identify any proposed to be taken by eminent domain or where work is proposed on Article 97 property. The DEIR should provide details on any replication proposed including the timeframe anticipated and the methods proposed to achieve successful replication. The DEIR should include a monitoring and contingency plan to ensure success of mitigation.</p>	Additional information regarding wetlands mitigation is provided in Chapter 4.16.
L-071.07	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Rare species (page 24): The DEIR should include a detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for each species.	Chapter 4.15 addresses mitigation for rare species impacts.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-071.08	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Biodiversity (page 29): The DEIR should describe measures proposed to avoid and minimize impacts, and include a detailed mitigation plan to address biodiversity impacts. The plan should include an estimate of mitigation costs such as funding for land acquisition, ecological assessment and monitoring programs, wildlife crossings, and other biodiversity conservation efforts. The DEIR should describe in quantitative and qualitative terms the extent to which the mitigation proposed will support biodiversity conservation and reduce or compensate for project-related impacts.	Detailed information on mitigation site costs cannot be provided at the current level of design. Additional information on mitigation is provided in this FEIS/FEIR.
L-071.09	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	Despite these specific requirements, the DEIS/R does not provide detailed mitigation plans for wetlands impacts or for impacts to rare species and biodiversity. These plans should be provided in a SDEIS/R.	Additional information on mitigation is provided in this FEIS/FEIR.
L-071.10	Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Inc.	For the reasons described above, we request that you require preparation of a SDEIS/R. If you decide not to require a SDEIS/R, we request that all of the information identified above be provided in the Final DEIS/R.	Thank you for your comment.
L-063.01	The Nature Conservancy	The Nature Conservancy is generally supportive of public transportation enhancements, recognizing they can play an important role in reducing vehicle miles traveled and associated environmental impacts. TNC has no objection to restoration of mass transit service from Boston to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford, provided potential impacts are comprehensively analyzed, and appropriate strategies are implemented to maximize positive impacts and avoid, minimize and mitigate negative impacts. This project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to important habitat for multiple state-listed species.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-063.02	The Nature Conservancy	In their 2009 report included in Appendix 4-14-A, Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) South Coast Rail Analysis, Compton et al. concluded, “overall the two routes through Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity. The trestle alternatives through Hockomock Swamp reduced the modeled loss of ecological integrity somewhat, although many of the benefits of a trestle are likely to occur at a local scale below that of the CAPS analysis.” Landscape scale fragmentation, as well as other indirect impacts such as changes in canopy cover, toxins, water quality, microclimate alterations, etc., caused by construction, operation and maintenance of rail through Hockomock Swamp is unlikely to be compensated for by the trestle. Further documentation and quantification of these impacts, and discussion of the likelihood of success of mitigation for such impacts, is needed.	Habitat fragmentation is discussed in Chapter 4.14. Chapter 4.16 details the secondary and indirect impacts to wetlands that would occur from the project. Chapter 5 describes the indirect impacts to wetlands that would occur from induced growth. The mitigation commitments are summarized in Chapter 7.
L-063.03	The Nature Conservancy	In contrast, the rapid bus alternative would have no impact on IEI--no loss of ecological integrity at landscape scale, and it is the least damaging to the function of the aquatic ecosystem. Direct impacts to priority habitat and wetlands associated with the rapid bus alternative involve higher acreage, but the ecological integrity of these areas adjacent to existing highway infrastructure is already impaired.	The Rapid Bus Alternative is no longer under consideration, see Chapter 3.
L-063.04	The Nature Conservancy	The combination of direct and indirect impacts of the Stoughton alternatives must be considered in this context.	Direct and indirect impacts were considered.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-063.05	The Nature Conservancy	Further, the proposed future construction of transit-oriented development at the Raynham Place station would introduce additional direct and indirect impacts to the integrity of Hockomock Swamp. “Undevelopment” and restoration of all or part of the former dog track site should be considered as compensatory mitigation for other unavoidable impacts.	<p>An analysis of potential direct and indirect effects of TOD at the Raynham Place Station would be speculative given the current, conceptual level of the South Coast Rail project at this time. Any redevelopment of the site for TOD would not impact the swamp. The evaluation provided in Chapter 5, including the municipal-specific projections provided in Appendix 5.3-A, identifies the potential indirect effects and cumulative impacts of the project at an appropriate level of detail.</p> <p>Chapter 4.16 potential mitigation efforts at this location. The existing construction site opposite the dog track on the west side of the alignment is proposed as one potential mitigation site that would remove this development and establish or re-establish wetlands at this location.</p>
L-063.06	The Nature Conservancy	It is clear from the analysis that Attleboro is not practicable due to constraints on construction and operation. However, we request that the rapid bus be retained as an alternative for further review in determination of the LEDPA, as it appears to meet the overall project purpose, “to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility”. Furthermore, the analysis indicates it is constructible and it is the least-cost alternative.	The Rapid Bus Alternative was further reviewed subsequent to the DEIS/DEIR, as described in Chapter 3 and Appendix 3.1-E.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-063.07	The Nature Conservancy	Regardless of the alternative selected, substantial mitigation will be required. Poorly planned development constitutes one of the primary causes of wildlife habitat loss and fragmentation in Massachusetts. Improvements in transportation infrastructure generally stimulate new residential and commercial development, and this growth can be expected to occur well beyond the vicinity of new rail or bus stations and existing urban centers. The Commonwealth's stated goal to build this project in a way that is consistent with smart growth principles is commendable. Implementation of the Corridor Plan is critical, including acquisition of lands with high IEI that can provide long term net benefits to rare species and working with towns to adopt smart growth practices. If the project stimulates scattered, low-density development, intended benefits in traffic reduction and air quality improvements may be offset. We appreciate the thoroughness of the analysis of this topic provided in the document.	Thank you for your comment.
L-063.08	The Nature Conservancy	The MEPA Certificate on the ENF for this project specifically required detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for impacts to rare species, wetlands, and biodiversity and wildlife. These detailed plans are not provided and should be included in an SDEIS/R or FEIS/R. It is unclear if mitigation costs are intended to be included as a "contingency" in cost estimates provided. An SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs and an explanation of how the project, Corridor Plan, and all compensatory mitigation will be financed.	<p>Detailed information on financing of the project, Corridor Plan and mitigation measures is not required; permit conditions will be include in the permit to enforce implementation of mitigation.</p> <p>Overall project mitigation costs were included in the cost estimate presented in Table 3.2-22.</p>
L-024.01	Truventis	The introduction of commuter rail to the South Coast will enable access to employment opportunities near Route 128 and downtown Boston. Our region has been battered by adverse economic conditions, and the implementation of full-scale, reliable commuter rail service is a critical step toward sustained economic recovery.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-024.02	Truventis	To make the service viable for commuters, a minimum of three trains in both the morning and afternoon peak periods should be utilized. A late evening train service to Boston should also be considered to allow for additional riders. Weekend service would help support the area's tourism economy, which continues to grow.	Chapter 3 provides information on the proposed operating plan.
L-083.01	The United Regional Chamber of Commerce	<p>The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has done an excellent job of thoroughly analyzing and evaluating the remaining alternatives based upon all of the factors involved. As a result of the DEIS/DEIR findings, one must logically and correctly conclude as follows:</p> <p>I.Enhanced Bus Alternative</p> <p>This would be an investment in the enhancement of the existing regional transportation network, but would not fulfill the project purpose and need to reactivate commuter rail service between Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Boston. However, it could be a welcome supplement in the short term.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-083.02	The United Regional Chamber of Commerce	<p>2. Rapid Bus Alternative</p> <p>This would require a significant and substantial investment to realize the contemplated further enhancement of the existing regional transportation network through the construction of additional highway infrastructure, rapid bus stations, and rapid bus layover facilities. However, it would still be subject to the limitations of the existing highway infrastructure, traffic and congestion, and resulting travel delays. In spite of the significant investment, it still would not fulfill the project purpose and need to reactivate commuter rail service between Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Boston. Although it could be a further supplement in the long run, the cost of development appears not to be justifiable.</p>	The Rapid Bus Alternative has been eliminated from further consideration, see Chapter 3.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-083.03	The United Regional Chamber of Commerce	<p>3. Attleboro Alternative</p> <p>This is the least practicable commuter rail alternative based upon cost, construction and operation. In addition, with consideration to the significant impact upon otherwise not impacted wetlands, it certainly does not meet the critical test of being the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). Therefore, because of its impracticability and infeasibility, this alternative should be deleted from any further review or consideration by either the ACOE or the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MDOT).</p>	The Attleboro Alternative has been eliminated from further consideration, see Chapter 3.
L-083.04	The United Regional Chamber of Commerce	<p>4. Whittenton Alternative</p> <p>This alternative is an unnecessary detour from the Stoughton Alternative, which I shall discuss next and last. It would create an extremely adverse impact on the City of Taunton with its multiple downtown grade crossings. Public Safety and economic development would suffer greatly, and people would become the endangered species. Operational issues would be more complex and costly, travel times would increase, and ridership would decrease. Therefore, this alternative does not pass the LEDPA test, and should be deleted from any further review and consideration by the ACOE and the MDOT.</p>	The impacts cited in the comment were studied in the FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-083.05	The United Regional Chamber of Commerce	<p>5. Stoughton Alternative</p> <p>This is the most practicable commuter rail alternative based upon all factors considered, and it fulfills the project purpose and need of restoring commuter rail service between Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and Boston. It is practicable, feasible and least environmentally damaging, and therefore passes the LEDPA test with flying colors. This alternative was utilized for commuter and freight rail service from the mid 1800's to the mid 1900's. It was discontinued because of the development of the interstate highway system during the Eisenhower Administration. America abandoned the rails and headed for the highways. However, this alternative can work again and it is the only one to accomplish the project mission. Our New England Yankee ancestors applied their proven wisdom of common sense and practicality, and we need to do the same. The MDOT has already designated Stoughton as their preferred alternative. Therefore, this is the one alternative that should be pursued by the ACOE and the MDOT for further review and consideration, and ultimately for development and operation.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-095.01	Walk Boston	<p>This important project is one that could positively impact the mobility of a great many residents of the southern sub-region of the Commonwealth.</p> <p>In terms of advocating for pedestrian service, we are concerned about certain analyses in the proposal and hope there are explanations for the actions based on them. Because of our concern, we request that certain points be given further attention during any follow-on permitting and planning work on the project.</p>	Comment noted.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-095.02	Walk Boston	A safe walking environment. Construction of any of the options in this report will result in a need for pedestrian improvements. Differing locations call for distinct approaches to pedestrian safety. Depending on the location, improvements may include new sidewalks to complete or connect to a network, signal-timing changes at intersections to allow more time for pedestrian crossings, passively activated crossing signs at pedestrian crossings, crosswalk striping, and pedestrian count-down signals. The proposed improvements included in this report appear to be a first cut. We assume that more measures for pedestrian safety will be needed and are to be added at a later date. It would be very helpful if these proposals were outlined.	Comment noted.
L-095.03	Walk Boston	Traffic calming elements are planned for streets in the Town of Easton in association with one of the alternatives. We would like to know how traffic calming suggestions were approached and handled in other communities, and what local responses may have been to such suggestions. Were traffic calming ideas fully explored in relation to each station?	Traffic conditions were evaluated and are described in Chapter 4.1 - Transportation and comments received during the DEIS/DEIR comment period are addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-095.04	Walk Boston	Each alternative displaces the use of a specific right of way by pedestrians for recreation purposes. We trust that there has been study to ascertain the importance of recreational (and possibly commuting) access in communities where the commuter rail will eliminate such use. This could be particularly important in communities that do not have alternatives for recreational opportunities. We wonder if unused rail corridors that are not to become part of a future commuter rail system can be candidates for permanent trails?	Comment noted. Impacts on existing open space were analyzed and are described in Chapter 4.10. The designation of unused rail corridors for recreation is not part of the Project Purpose.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-095.05	Walk Boston	There is some confusion about walking distances to stations. A distinction has been made between a 5 minute walking distance (usually a 0.25 mile distance) and a 0.5-mile perimeter around proposed stations. See, for example, Figs. 4.4-8 to 4.4-25 and 4.2-8 to 4.2-34 and 4.10-10 to 4.10-32. Why are there differences in the analyses of radius determination and what impact does it have on pedestrian access?	The DEIS/R states that "one-half mile is the average walking distance to a station." (Environmental Justice, pg. 4.4-15). All referenced figures show a half mile radius around the proposed stations.
L-095.06	Walk Boston	The proposed Battleship Cove Station in Fall River does not seem to be as detailed as other proposals (Figure 4.5-54). Because of its location adjacent to the marine museum and downtown, this location seems to be potentially important for tourism, for access to downtown Fall River and for commuter traffic. Yet it appears to be relegated to part-time use. What is the explanation for this approach?	Battleship Cove Station has been analyzed as a full-time station including a full schedule of service. Whether the station operates as a full-time commuter station or a seasonal tourist stop has not yet been determined.
L-095.07	Walk Boston	Fall River access issues need immediate attention irrespective of the process of bringing new rail or bus access to the South Coast sub-region. We are particularly concerned about data that show that environmental justice communities in Fall River are already significantly disadvantaged. The analysis shows that all proposed alternatives would improve access to jobs for Fall River residents by more than 100% and would improve access to hospitals for Fall River residents by up to 400% (Fig. 4.4-51). No other community in the south coast study region has such a large deficiency of access. In the event that the South Coast project does not move forward, are there any opportunities for ameliorating this situation?	Comment noted. The future condition without the project is represented by the No-Build Alternative. Measures to address Environmental Justice issues under No Build Alternative are outside the purview of the proposed action.
L-047.01	Weaver's Cover Energy	The attached comments are being timely filed prior to the May 27, 2011 close of the public comment period. We look forward to seeing responses to these comments incorporated into either a supplemental draft environmental impact report I supplemental draft environmental impact statement or a final environmental impact report I final environmental impact statement.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.02	Weaver's Cover Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.18-26 that the use of the Weaver's Cove Energy's (WCE) West Layover Facility Site: "...for layover is consistent with Designated Port Area (DPA) temporary uses and would not effect the Mount Hope Bay DPA." This interpretation is at odds with the definition of "Temporary Uses" as defined in 310 CMR 9.02. 310 CMR 9.02 states:</p> <p>"Temporary Use means warehousing, trucking, parking, and other industrial and transportation uses which occupy vacant space or facilities in a Designated Port Area, for a maximum term of ten years as specified in 310 CMR 9.15(1)(d), and without significant structural alteration of such space or facilities."</p> <p>Building the WCE's West Layover Facility Site overnight yard is inconsistent with 310 CMR 9.02 because it involves "significant structural alteration" that is intended to remain in place for well in excess of 10 years. The DEIS/DEIR should explicitly address this inconsistency. The DEIS/DEIR should explain why building a rail yard and support facilities on the site is not a "significant alteration of such space or facilities".</p>	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further evaluation as a layover facility site.
L-047.03	Weaver's Cover Energy	<p>In addition to not meeting the definition of a temporary use, 3.10.CMR 9.02 also states:</p> <p>"Temporary uses may be licensed only if marketing efforts have failed to identify any prospective water-dependent industrial tenant, and if the license is conditioned to require further solicitation of such tenancy upon expiration of the license term."</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR documents no such solicitation. Logic suggests that WCE itself would respond to such a solicitation because it has been developing a water dependent use on the site for close to a decade. The DEIS/DEIR should document the planned solicitation process and WCE should be included in the solicitation.</p>	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further evaluation as a layover facility site.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.04	Weaver's Cover Energy	<p>310 CMR 9.15(1) (d) 1. states:</p> <p>“...in Designated Port Areas, the term of license for any non-water-dependent use in a marine industrial park shall not exceed 65 years; the term of license for any supporting DPA use shall not exceed 30 years; and the term of license for any temporary use shall not exceed ten years”.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should explicitly document the term of the license. If a variance has been granted, the DEIS/DEIR should document the process by which the variance was obtained and explain the legal justification for such a variance. If a variance will be sought, the basis on which the Project meets the variance requirements should be documented in the DEIS/DEIR. If the license period is for only 10 years, as required under 310 CMR 9.15(1) (d) 1, then the DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the economic and environmental impacts of relocating the overnight yard in 10 years time should any water dependent use surface when the required solicitation is issued at the expiration of the 10 year license.</p>	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further evaluation as a layover facility site.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.05	Weaver's Cover Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR incorrectly states that WCE will not locate any facilities on the WCE East Layover site. The DEIS/DEIR should reflect the facts shared by WCE with Christina Egan and other members of the South Coast Rail project development team in meetings, e-mails and letters. The technical aspects of WCE's LNG development are extensively documented on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Website under docket CP04-36. Also see <a href="http://www.weaverscove.com">www.weaverscove.com</a>. WCE notified South Coast rail both verbally and via written correspondence that the Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project has received a FERC certification to site an interstate natural gas pipeline on the East Layover Site in the precise location where the Massachusetts's Department of Transportation (MDOT) is currently proposing the overnight layover facility.</p> <p>The South Coast Rail project development team has been made aware, and the DEIS/DEIR should reflect the fact that Weaver's Cove Energy will need access to construct the pipeline in the designated and FERC approved pipeline right of way.</p> <p>WCE has also notified South Coast rail both verbally and via written correspondence that the Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project has received a FERC certification to site facilities in the precise location where MDOT is currently proposing the West layover facilities.</p>	The Weaver's Cove East site has been selected as the preferred location for a layover facility on the Fall River Secondary portion of the Southern Triangle. Because the Weaver's Cove LNG project has been cancelled, a layover facility at this location would not affect the referenced pipeline.
L-047.06	Weaver's Cover Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the implications if any of constructing a layover yard over a 24" inch diameter high pressure interstate natural gas pipeline. Pipelines routinely cross under railroad tracks to get from one side to the other, but routing them along the axis of the track is a unique approach. South Coast Rail needs to address in the DEIS/DEIR the implications and risks of siting active rail lines over a long and continuous run of high pressure interstate pipeline.	The Weaver's Cove West site no longer includes a proposed Liquefied Natural Gas site. Additionally, the Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further evaluation as a layover facility site.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.07	Weaver's Cove Energy	As documented in the permitting documents available on the FERC website in Docket CP4-036, the proposed rail layover yard would be sited on a wetland mitigation area for the Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project. The DEIS/DEIR should address the impact of the proposed layover yard on the wetland mitigation plans that are documented in WCE's FERC and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit filings. Pertinent materials were sent by Weaver's Cove Energy to the South Coast Rail project team several months before the DEIS/DEIR was issued.	The Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project has been cancelled; the South Coast Rail project would not affect the wetland mitigation plans for that facility.
L-047.08	Weaver's Cove Energy	WCE's FERC and USACE permitting documents clearly show how the site will be used for laydown, staging and construction. WCE has communicated these facts to MDOT and South Coast rail in written and verbal communications. The DEIS/DEIR should show how the construction and operation of the overnight yard is compatible with the above uses of the property by WCE.	The Weaver's Cove Energy LNG project has been cancelled; the South Coast Rail project would not affect the wetland mitigation plans for that facility.
L-047.09	Weaver's Cove Energy	Both the proposed WCE's East and West Layover facilities would be constructed on property that currently accommodates remediation equipment which is owned and operated by a previous landowner under an agreement with WCE. Access to contaminated areas of the site is required to remediate the site under Massachusetts Contingency Plan process. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the impacts of the proposed layover site on the remediation process and explicitly address whether or not the placement of the layover yard on the site will have an impact on the cost of conducting the remediation. If the placement of the facility will result in incremental mitigation costs, the DEIS/DEIR should clearly explain which entity will be responsible for paying these incremental costs. The incremental costs should also be factored into the economic analysis which should be added as part of the layover site selection report which is included in Appendix 3.2-E of the DEIS/DEIR. (NOTE: several of the comments below address this appendix and discuss how the cost of the siting the layover yard should be incorporated into the study).	The Weaver's Cove West site no longer includes a proposed Liquefied Natural Gas site. Additionally, the Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further evaluation as a layover facility site. The Weaver's Cove East site has been selected for the layover facility on the Fall River Secondary, as described in the Chapter 3. Costs related to developing this site are included in that report.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.10	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>301 CMR 9.02 which states:</p> <p>“Supporting DPA Use means an industrial or commercial use in a Designated Port Area that provides water-dependent industrial use in the DPA with direct economic or operational support, to an extent that adequately compensates for the reduced amount of tidelands on the project site that will be available for water-dependent industrial use during the term of the license. The type, location, scale, duration, operation, and other relevant aspects of the industrial or commercial use must be compatible with activities characteristic of a working waterfront and its backlands, in order to preserve in the long run the predominantly industrial character of the DPA and its viability for maritime development. In determining whether an industrial or commercial use qualifies as a Supporting DPA Use, the Department shall act in accordance with the following provisions as well as all applicable provisions of a DPA Master Plan.</p> <p>In the case of commercial uses, any use may be determined to be compatible with the DPA except where the inherent nature of the use gives rise to severe conflict with port operations or excessive consumption of port space, either directly or indirectly (e.g. as a result of collateral development activity). Accordingly, new or expanded uses that shall not be determined to be a Supporting DPA Use include, but are not limited to, transient group quarters such as hotels/motels, nursing homes, and hospitals; recreational boating facilities; amusement parks and other major entertainment or sports complexes; and new buildings devoted predominantly to office use. Conversely, uses that shall be presumed compatible with the DPA are small business uses that are adaptable to the upper floors of existing buildings, to minor infill parcels, and to other interstitial spaces not likely (in their own right or in combination with other nearby spaces) to be of primary importance in attracting maritime development to the DPA. Typical of such uses are storefront retail and service facilities; shops operated by self-employed trade persons; eating and</p>	<p>An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's impact on Designated Port Areas is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>drinking establishments with limited seating; and small-scale administrative offices.....”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should quantify and document how siting the layover yard within a DPA will provide “direct operational or economic support” to that DPA. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the effect of the no build alternative on the DPA (meaning the layover yard is built, but it is built outside the boundaries of the DPA).</p>	
L-047.100	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.18-26 states:</p> <p>“The Waterway’s License determination for the installation and backfilling of the PiP LNG Transfer system confirmed that the site includes filled tidelands.”</p> <p>This statement cannot be correct. MDEP has not even begun to process any of WCE’s Pipe-in-Pipe (PiP) permit applications. No determinations have been issued for the PiP system by MDEP and MDEP has made it clear in writing that it will not issue any determination until such time as Weaver’s Cove Energy’s MEPA review of the PiP system is completed. Statements made in the DEIS/DEIR should clearly reference the permit decision document upon which conclusions are being drawn. No reference has been provided and therefore the veracity of the claim being made is difficult to test/check/confirm. In this case, the text is NOT factually correct.</p>	Filled tidelands are discussed in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.11	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 5-61 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“residential property values would increase by 5 to 25 percent within one mile of new station sites and decrease by up to 20% within 400 feet of the alignments and layover facilities.”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should provide reference to the study or studies that support the determination that property values would decline by the stated percentages at the one mile and 400 foot distances. The DEIS/DEIR should explain and reconcile how the prescribed distances relate to the site specific view shed because it is these site specific view sheds between neighboring landowners and the proposed rail facilities that drive the economic impacts – in addition to noise, vibration, traffic, and air quality impacts.</p>	<p>The analysis of impacts to property values is provided in DEIS/DEIR Section 4.3, Socioeconomics, with the property value impact analysis methodology described on pages 4.3 25 and 4.3-26. A range of sources was used, as cited therein. That analysis was refined by the results of the noise assessment that identified moderate or severe impacts within 400 feet of the railroad alignment or layover facilities, as described in DEIS/DEIR Chapter 5, Section 5.4.3.3, Tax Revenue. A visual analysis was not included in this evaluation.</p>
L-047.12	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIR/DEIS lists the potential wetlands impacts for a number of rail line route alternatives. The DEIS/DEIR should quantify the acreage of impacted wetland resources associated with the various “overnight” and “mid-day” facility alternatives and how these impacts would be mitigated. Wetland areas should be mapped and a description of the quality of the wetland should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should include a single table that lists the individual wetland impacts by location and the total acreage of wetland impacts. As currently written, the wetland impacts are scattered throughout the DEIS/DEIR making it difficult to understand the various individual and cumulative impacts. Wetland areas impacted are currently based on crude GIS data instead of site specific surveys of wetland areas. GIS data is not generally based on ground surveys but instead relies of aerial photography. It is also often dated and can therefore be unreliable and inaccurate. The DEIS/DEIR should be based upon new (current) site specific wetland survey data. MADOT should conduct surveys of wetland areas along each route, at each station, and at overnight and day layover yards.</p>	<p>Wetland impacts for all alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR or provided in multiple tables by type of impact (including impacts to federal and state regulated wetlands) and location. Where the alternatives are identical (i.e. in the Southern Triangle), wetland impacts have been described for all alternatives, to consolidate the information and enable the reviewer to - in addition to the impacts of all Build Alternatives relative to the No Build Alternative - also focus on the differences among the Build Alternatives. The wetland impacts (similar to other impacts) in addition to being individually assessed have also been aggregated in summary tables in Chapter 3 and in the Executive Summary to provide an overview. The USACE has verified the accuracy of the mapping data based on established procedures and in accordance with the technical requirements for environmental impact analysis based on the current level of design of alternatives.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.13	Weaver's Cove Energy	Much like wetland impacts being scattered throughout the DEIS/DEIR, there are other important statistics that should be organized in such a way that readers of the DEIS/DEIR can easily understand the total impacts. Total impact tables should be included for all the other key impacts including, but not limited to, real estate taxes foregone, acreage of properties taken (by category), tons of air emissions (CO2, NOX, VOC, etc.) from all the sources, etc.	FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives, provides summary information in tabular form indicating the adverse and beneficial direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of each of the alternatives under consideration. Chapter 4, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences provides detailed analyses of direct impacts to each resource evaluated, and Chapter 5, Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts, provides detailed analyses of these
L-047.15	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate how short listing each of the five overnight yard alternative locations would support or detract from the development of the Regional Smart Growth Plan being championed by MDOT under MEPA. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss how the ranking of the alternative overnight yard locations would change if Smart Growth planning is or is not considered in the selection process.	The smart growth measures described in the Corridor Plan have been taken into consideration by MassDOT in the design of all project elements to the extent practical. The overnight layover facilities, for example, are sited outside of Priority Development Areas to allow for smart growth development near station sites, although the Wamsutta site for the overnight layover facility in New Bedford is adjacent to the PDA established around the proposed Whale's Tooth Station. The facilities are also outside of Priority Protection Areas to minimize adverse impacts to the environment.
L-047.16	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should identify which of the overnight and midday yard alternative locations discussed in Appendix 3.2-E (Layover Facility Alternatives Analysis) are located in "Priority Development Areas" listed in the "Corridor Plan" that is discussed in P.3.1 on page p-5 of the DEIS/DEIR.	The two preferred overnight layover facility locations, at the Weaver's Cove East site in Fall River and the Wamsutta site in New Bedford, are not located within Priority Development Areas. The Wamsutta site is adjacent to the PDA established around the proposed Whale's Tooth Station. A preferred location for the mid-day layover facility has not been identified, but will be as part of the separate South Station Expansion project. That facility is expected to be near South Station, distant from the geographic area considered in the Corridor Plan.
L-047.17	Weaver's Cove Energy	Each overnight yard alternative occupies more land area than a typical train station, thus logic suggests that the potential impacts from overnight yard siting would be as significant if not more significant than impacts emanating from a typical train station site. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the potential impacts associated with the siting, permitting, construction and operation of each overnight and midday yard locations.	Each resource evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR includes an analysis of potential impacts from alternatives for all project elements: the rail line, stations, and overnight layover facilities. A mid-day layover facility site is not considered in this FEIS/FEIR, as it would be part of the separate South Station Expansion project.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.18	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DIES/DEIR should evaluate the impact of noise generating activities that will occur at night when ambient noise levels are low and people are likely to be sleeping with their windows open. The noise analysis should be expanded to consider the impact of noise generated when trains enter or leave the overnight yard. In particular, the noise analysis should evaluate the noise associated with trains accelerating out of the yard and decelerating into the yard (e.g., brakes squeaking). The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate the noise impacts associated with train wheels squealing as they navigate the curved switches within the yard. The DEIS/DEIR should quantify how loud the noise from this activity will be once it reaches the closest sensitive receptor in the vicinity of each overnight yard site studied in Appendix 3.2-E.	Noise impacts are described in Chapter 4.6. Idling locomotives, for the diesel-powered alternatives, are expected to be the greatest source of increased noise levels at the layover facilities. The electric-powered alternatives would not provide this source. Figures for Chapter 4.6, provided in Volume II, identify the sensitive receptors within the modeled sound impact area. The Noise Analysis followed the FTA guidelines for evaluating the layover facility. It does not specifically address an analysis of wheel squeal. The noise analysis assumed that the layover facility track and rail car/wheel materials will be designed to minimize potential for wheel squeal.
L-047.19	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should include a site specific traffic analysis for each of the overnight yard locations listed in Appendix 3.2-E. Impacts to the traffic conditions on roads surrounding each rail yard site should be evaluated. This work should be based upon completion of site specific traffic count studies. The impact of the incremental traffic generated by the project can then be studied using appropriate and approved traffic models. Intersections that might suffer excessive degradation in service should be documented and where appropriate mitigation to restore acceptable service should be documented in the DEIS/DEIR and included as a project activity, including its costs, environmental and operating impact on the public during design, construction and operation.	Traffic impacts are described in Chapter 4.1. Traffic impacts at the layover facility sites are expected to be negligible due to the low volume of trips that would be made on local roads.
L-047.20	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should describe whether or not traffic signals and sidewalk work will be required for some or all of the proposed overnight yard and midday yard locations.	Traffic impacts are described in Chapter 4.1. The layover facilities would not require new traffic signals. Access to the facilities will tie into existing sidewalks.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.21	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should include an analysis of visual impacts associated with the lighting at night for each of the sites considered in Appendix 3.2-E. The analysis should consider the impact on abutting property owners as well as viewshed impacts from nearby locations including historical cultural sites. The analysis should describe site specific proposed lighting plans and mitigation plans for each of the alternatives.	Visual impacts are described in Chapter 4.5. The layover facilities would be visible from adjoining properties but would not differ substantively from the existing developed visual environment. There would be no viewshed impacts to historical sites.
L-047.22	Weaver's Cove Energy	The Weaver's Cove West overnight yard site is a brownfield site that is contaminated with Light Non- Aqueous Phase Liquids (LNAPL) floating on the water table. Due to this contamination, the parcel has had its use restricted through a deed restriction imposed by a prior owner of the site. The DEIS/DEIR should address how MDOT intends to address this legal restriction and how such measures would impact the site's attractiveness relative to other alternatives identified in Appendix 3.2-E.	Hazardous materials impacts are described in Chapter 4.12. The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further consideration.
L-047.23	Weaver's Cove Energy	Title searches should be completed for all alternative overnight yard sites to determine if there are additional deed restrictions, other than the one identified in Comment 17, that need to be considered. This title work needs to be completed to understand whether or not the proposed configuration of the Project is viable.	The current property owners for parcels that would be acquired for the project have been identified by MassDOT; individual parcels (but not owner names) are listed in Chapter 4.3, Socioeconomics.
L-047.24	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should identify a preferred location for the overnight yard locations. Failing to identify a preferred alternative suggests that Mass DOT may be attempting to segment review of the project by studying the overnight yard locations separately from the rail and bus line routes and the station locations.	Preferred locations for the overnight layover facilities have been identified in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives: the Weaver's Cove East site in Fall River and the Wamsutta site in New Bedford.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.25	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR fails to identify even a single midday yard location. The DEIS/DEIR should include full assessments of specific midday yard alternatives because they are essential elements of the project. The potential locations of midday yards should be listed and a preferred location identified in the DEIS/DEIR along with a description of the proposed facilities so the abutting and nearby landowners are provided the same opportunity to comment as landowners near the other proposed facilities associated with the Project. The Project should be reviewed as a whole in the DEIS/DEIR – not segmented as is the case of the current draft the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>A mid-day layover facility will be identified as part of the separate South Station Expansion project, and would utilized for the South Coast Rail project.</p>
L-047.26	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page P-9 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“Because the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS/DEIR have substantially different levels of environmental impacts (which are of necessity only estimates at this design stage) and would impact environmental resources in different locations, it is not practical to provide a fully detailed mitigation plan for each alternative and resource at this stage of the project development..... The EOEEA has agreed that this is the appropriate level of information ... and has waived the requirements to include detailed wetland mitigation plans in this document.”</p> <p>Under what regulatory authority was this decision made and who within Executive Office Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) authorized the decision? The DEIS/DEIR should document the legal basis under which EOEEA waived the requirements to include details on wetland mitigation. In order not to segment the review of the project, the amount and type of mitigation should be documented in the DEIS/DEIR. The feasibility of implementing the required level of mitigation should also be discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. While the precise listing of each mitigation site may not be required, at least a set of possibilities should be provided in the DEIS/DEIR with a few preferred mitigation sites identified.</p>	<p>Page 23 of the MEPA Secretary's Certificate on the DEIS/DEIR cites the agreement. The Certificate also states that detailed mitigation plans should be included in the FEIS/FEIR. Chapter 7, Proposed Mitigation and MassDOT Proposed Section 61 Findings, provides the mitigation plans based on the current level of project design. The mitigation plans will be further refined, in coordination with the appropriate regulatory agencies, as the project design is advanced.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.27	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should explain how a preferred layover alternative can be selected if the environmental impacts studied and evaluated to generate the current short list were neither detailed nor specific. The DEIS/DEIR should specifically document the legal basis under which the project can be developed and alternative layover sites identified without collecting current site specific data. [GIS layer data is typically used as a crude screening tool. The DEIS/DEIR should include ground level surveys that confirm the accuracy of the GIS data. Wetlands need to be identified and located by ground survey teams. Elevation contours need to be determined and estimates of cut and fill completed. Title searches need to be conducted to identify land use restrictions. The level and type of contamination and ongoing remediation techniques need to be defined – with remediation equipment located on drawings of the site.]	FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives, describes the selection process and criteria used to identify the preferred locations for the two overnight layover facilities.
L-047.28	Weaver's Cove Energy	The Secretary's Certificate and USACE decision should document and affirm that the selected overnight yard locations are the "Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternatives". The initial screen used to assess the viability of overnight yard locations was not based on sufficient data to support a position by either agency. Crude qualitative evaluations need to be replaced with studies of a quantitative nature. The capital cost differences between the sites should be compared to the operating cost differences between the sites.	FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives, describes the selection process and criteria used to identify the preferred locations for the two overnight layover facilities. Section 3.3.4.1, Findings, discusses USACE's conclusions regarding the LEDPA. USACE cannot speculate on the Secretary's conclusions, which will be rendered after publication of this FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.29	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should report at what point in the review process will the USACE and/or the Secretary select the preferred overnight yard locations. Will the public be afforded an opportunity to comment on this selection before the review process under MEPA and NEPA are completed and before the rail line options are narrowed down?	MassDOT has selected the identified locations for the overnight layover facilities, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives. USACE has evaluated the environmental impacts associated with the two sites, as described in Chapter 4, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences. The USACE conclusions are provided in Section 3.3.4.1, Findings. The public was invited to comment on the project, including the overnight layover facility locations, during the DEIS/DEIR public comment period, as described in Chapter 9, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination.
L-047.30	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should include a copy of the notifications sent to abutters and nearby residents of the overnight yard locations to demonstrate that input from interested parties was, and is, being solicited. The rail yards are significant facilities and landowners near them should be notified. Landowners near the track rights of way are most likely aware that train traffic may increase on those lines as a result of the project without any special notification effort. However, it is very unlikely that a landowner near the track would anticipate the construction of a rail yard near or adjacent to their property. As part of the "Civic Engagement" process discussed in the DEIS/DEIR, an effort should be made to reach out to nearby landowners. Landowners within 1500 feet of any proposed layover yard location or those with a direct view of the yard if that distance is farther, should be notified in writing via mail that specific sites near or adjacent to their property are being considered for overnight yard locations.	Public input opportunities since publication of the DEIS/DEIR are described in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 9, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination. Abutters to the overnight layover facility sites were welcomed to comment on the DEIS/DEIR and may do so on this FEIS/FEIR; both documents are available publicly. Specific abutter notification letters will be sent to property owners when the property acquisition process is initiated.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.31	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS simply assumes that the overnight yard locations for trains should be at the terminus of the lines (away from Boston) in order to avoid “deadheading” trains for the morning commute. Since no midday layover facilities have been selected, (not a single potential location is listed in the DEIS/DEIR), consideration should given to relocating the overnight yard locations so a single storage yard location can serve both overnight and mid-day storage of trains for both the Fall River and New Bedford line. The DEIS/DEIR concluded that the overnight yards are best located in Fall River and New Bedford by assuming that sufficient mid-day storage facilities will be in place at a location near Boston. In some parts of the DEIS/DEIR, it is reported that the midday facilities will be addressed at a future date. In other parts of the DEIS/DEIR it is assumed that mid-day train storage facilities will be provided by the MBTA and that the development of these yards is outside the scope of the current Project being reviewed.</p> <p>If new train storage capacity is needed, the DEIS/DEIR should address the impacts of all of the required storage facilities. It is insufficient for MA DOT to simply conclude that the needed mid-day storage will be made available by others on a timely basis. If another agency is going to provide the needed services, such as the MBTA, then the locations of that spare capacity should be documented in the DEIS along with written correspondence from the MBTA documenting its commitment to making that capacity available to the South Coast Rail project. The DEIS/DEIR will be deficient if South Coast rail and MDOT are allowed to simply state that unknown and unnamed existing or planned storage facilities will be utilized. The DEIS/DEIR should specifically address the environmental impacts of utilizing specific existing or planned storage facilities. The development of mid-day storage facilities required to operate the project should be included in the scope of the DEIS/DEIR environmental review.</p>	<p>The layover facility site alternative selection process described in the DEIS/DEIR is summarized and incorporated by reference in the FEIS/FEIR; the selection of the two preferred alternative locations for the sites in Fall River and New Bedford is described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, Section 3.2.16, Layover Facilities. A mid-day layover facility will be identified in the separate South Station Expansion project, and would be used for the South Coast Rail project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.32	Weaver's Cove Energy	A discussion of mitigation associated with the numerous train stations is included in the body of the DEIS/DEIR. A discussion of the site specific mitigation required by the development of the overnight and mid-day train storage facilities should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. See Table 4.1-87.	Chapter 7, Proposed Mitigation and MassDOT Proposed Section 61 Findings, provides the mitigation plans based on the current level of project design, including for the overnight layover facilities. The mitigation plans will be further refined, in coordination with the appropriate regulatory agencies, as the project design is advanced. Mitigation for environmental impacts, if any, that would result from the mid-day layover facility, would be included in the separate South Station Expansion project.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.33	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The total acres of property required to site the overnight rail yard seem to vary drastically by site. To site the overnight yard on the WCE West Site, the DEIS/DEIR reports that 57.91 acres would be required and all of Weaver's Cove's land west of the railroad tracks would be acquired by the project. To site the overnight yard on the WCE East site, MDOT reports that only 17.99 acres of the approximately 20 acre parcel owned by Weaver's Cove east of the rail line is required. To site the overnight yard on the ISP site a total a 43.57 acres would have to be acquired by MDOT.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should include drawings that show how much land is needed to site the facility (permanent use of the land), and how much land is needed to support the construction of the facility (temporary use of the land). Drawings for each of the overnight yards considered (a dozen or more) should clearly show the entire outline of the property line of the parcel being impacted and properly lines of the neighboring parcels, wetlands located, the grading of that area of the overnight yard shown, the areas needing to be cut/filled to achieve the appropriate grading for a rail yard, a quantitative estimate of cut and fill volumes, and a listing of the total acreage of each parcel hosting south coast rail facilities and the acreage taken. Drawings of the layover facilities in Appendix 3.2-E and in the body of the DEIS/DEIR should clearly document the total acreage of each tax parcel effected by the proposed siting of a layover yard, the portion of the parcel being taken by the project should be recorded on the drawing and shaded and the acreage of the portion of the parcel that will remain with the current owner should be recorded and shaded on the drawing.</p>	<p>Property acquisition requirements for both of the preferred overnight layover facility locations, the Weaver's Cove East site in Fall River and the Wamsutta site in New Bedford, are provided in Chapter 4.2, Land Use and Zoning, and Chapter 4.3, Socioeconomics, and accompanying figures. The figures depict the conceptual layout of the facilities to the extent required for the NEPA analysis included in this FEIS/FEIR; further details will be developed as the design is advanced.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.34	Weaver's Cove Energy	Two of the overnight yard options require taking roughly 50 acres of land (WCE West and ISP) and the other (WCE East) requires roughly 17 acres. The DEIS/DEIR should explain how and why the land taking requirements at each site differ so drastically. If the smaller Weaver's Cove East site really is viable site at 17 acres, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why the project must take the full 57.91 acres of the Weaver's Cove West site in order to site the layover yard West of the tracks.	The Weaver's Cove West site and the ISP site have been dismissed from further consideration as overnight layover facility locations. The property acquisition requirements for the Weaver's Cove East site, the preferred location in Fall River, are explained in Chapter 4.2, Land Use and Zoning.
L-047.35	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>All of the sites in the current short list for the Fall River layover yard are contaminated. Many of the additional alternatives listed in the Appendix are also contaminated. Simply relying on generic statements that do not address the details of the site specific nature of the contamination does not provide to the public the information on which they need to comment.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should explain how the presence of historical environmental contamination will effect the development of each of the overnight yard locations listed in the DEIS/DEIR as well as in Appendix 3.2-E. The nature of the contamination should be described and the ongoing or planned methods to remediate the sites should be described. The impact of the construction and operation of the rail yard on each remediation method should be discussed. The approximate incremental cost of building on a brownfield site should be documented. The party responsible for doing the remediation work should be identified. If siting an overnight yard on the site will increase remediation costs, the DEIS/DEIR should identify who will be responsible for paying these incremental costs. The DEIS/DEIR should include this type of analysis and explanation for each of the layover yards discussed in the layover yard site selection document in Appendix 3.2-E.</p>	FEIS/FEIR Chapter 4.12, Hazardous Materials, describes the contamination known to be present at the preferred overnight layover facility locations in Fall River and New Bedford, based on readily available information. This evaluation is sufficient for NEPA review. Further investigation into the nature and extent of contamination may be warranted as the project progresses.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.36	Weaver's Cove Energy	While the above comment addresses only the layover yards, the same comments apply to proposed station locations. Additional site analysis should be completed for all the station sites considered.	See response to comment L-047.35.
L-047.37	Weaver's Cove Energy	The existing contamination of the three short listed Fall River overnight yard sites may preclude their use as train storage facilities. Until it is confirmed that the three listed sites are viable, they should be removed from the short list.	See response to comment L-047.35.
L-047.38	Weaver's Cove Energy	The construction of an overnight yard could impact the technical feasibility of the ongoing remediation of contaminated properties and could impact the cost and schedule of ongoing remediation efforts which are currently being implemented by the prior owner(s) of the sites and parties responsible for remediating the contamination. The presence of an overnight yard could also restrict the implementation of future remediation efforts. For example, the WCE site has an active groundwater pump and treat system (groundwater depression system) combined with LNAPL recovery wells (skimming wells) scattered across the property. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how the development of the overnight yard will impact the location of the existing extraction and injection wells as well as how the overnight facility will impact the routing of the various treatment system pipelines, electrical services, and compressed air services routed both aboveground and underground across the site.	The evaluation provided in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 4.12, Hazardous Materials, evaluation is sufficient for NEPA review. Further investigation into existing remediation systems at the Weaver's Cove East site would likely be conducted as the project design progresses.
L-047.39	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should discuss whether or not the South Coast Rail Project developer intends to indemnify owners for possible increases in remediation costs that might arise should rail facilities be constructed on contaminated lands. The DEIS/DEIR should report who will be responsible for these incremental costs.	Responsibility for any future remediation costs for past contamination would likely be determined by existing federal and state laws and regulations such as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, aka "Superfund") and the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP).
L-047.40	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should discuss whether or not the South Coast Rail Project will assume responsibility for any releases of historical contamination that result from either the construction or operation of the Project.	See response to comment L-047.39.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.41	Weaver's Cove Energy	The brownfield remediation plan being implemented at the WCE site contemplates drilling wells and extracting LNAPL from the thickest areas of the LNAPL plume under-laying the site. For maximum recovery at the lowest cost, extraction wells are located at the thickest area of the plume. The restrictions that an overnight yard might impose on the ability of a remediation system designer to install extraction well where they are needed (now and in the future) needs to be evaluated and discussed in the DEIS/DEIR.	See response to comment L-047.38.
L-047.42	Weaver's Cove Energy	The location of impervious surfaces associated with the overnight yard and their impact on groundwater flows and recharge rates should be discussed in cases such as the WCE site where the contamination can migrate and LNAPL plumes can shift. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how the construction and operation of the rail yard (in particular cut and fill operations) will impact local groundwater flows under the site. If groundwater flows will change, the DEIS/DEIR should discuss what steps will be taken to prevent contamination from migrating into uncontaminated or surrounding landholdings.	The evaluation provided in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 4.12, Hazardous Materials, evaluation is sufficient for NEPA review. Further investigation into existing remediation systems and hydrologic regime at the Weaver's Cove East site would likely be conducted as the project design progresses.
L-047.43	Weaver's Cove Energy	The rail stations are described as a net benefit to the communities that host them. The operation of rail lines is described in the DEIS/DEIR as a net negative to neighboring landowners. These two factors are spread relatively evenly into regions that lie inside and outside environmental justice areas. The DEIS should explain why the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, both cities subject to Environmental Justice concerns, should be saddled with all the undesirable Overnight Yard facilities when more affluent and well off communities do not have to host any overnight yard facilities.	As described in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives, the preferred locations for overnight layover facilities were identified based on several criteria, including both operational considerations and environmental impacts. The evaluation of impacts to environmental justice populations, as described in Chapter 4.4, Environmental Justice, concluded that these populations would not be disproportionately impacted by the proposed project.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.44	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>If the construction of overnight facilities on WCE's property prevents the construction of an LNG facility on the WCE site, Tax losses to the City of Fall River and the town of Somerset resulting from the loss of the LNG facility and Offshore Berth would exceed \$5 million per year in Fall River and several million per year in Somerset. Job losses due to the precluded development of the LNG facility would be 2,500,000 labor hours during construction and in excess of roughly 50 full time employees and an equivalent number of contract staff. These employment and tax issues should be discussed in the DEIR/DEIR. The net beneficial employment impacts of the Weaver's Cove project are discussed in the FEIS issued by FERC in May of 2005 for that project.</p>	<p>The WCE LNG project is not part of the No Build condition as it is not a reasonably foreseeable project. The South Coast Rail project would not result in the socioeconomic impacts described by the commenter.</p>
L-047.45	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR fails to mention the new industrial park that is under development. The industrial park straddles the Fall River and Freetown borders (a new highway exit off route 24/79 which is currently being built by the state on this industrial estate – Stop and Shop is a tenant). This site is a potential location for overnight and layover facilities. The DEIS should include a map of the industrial estate clearly delineating the boundaries of the entire estate and those areas of the estate that are built out to date. Site specific wetland data should be readily available for this area as it has been under development for years. The total acreage of the estate and in particular the not yet built out areas should be delineated and recorded. The distance between the estate and the proposed routing of the Fall River line should be documented. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the feasibility of using this industrial estate as layover/overnight facilities. If some of the existing overnight facilities discussed in the appendix to the DEIS/DEIR are located in the industrial estate (no mention is made of this in the current DEIS/DEIR), the discussion of those facilities should be expanded to include a clear definition and description of the estate, the full boundaries of the estate, and current land uses (developed and built) within the estate. Layout drawings should be modified to include the estate boundaries and site specific wetland characterizations.</p>	<p>The layover facility site alternative selection process described in the DEIS/DEIR is summarized and incorporated by reference in the FEIS/FEIR; the selection of the two preferred alternative locations for the sites in Fall River and New Bedford is described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, Section 3.2.16, Layover Facilities.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.46	Weaver's Cove Energy	The above comments should be applied to the Fall River Industrial park (formerly a municipal airport).	See response to Comment L-047.35.
L-047.47	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>With regards to placing an overnight yard on the WCE West Site, the DEIS/DEIR states (page 4.2-48):</p> <p>“Use of this site for this purpose [the siting of an LNG terminal] would preclude its use as a layover facility for the Fall River Secondary.”</p> <p>In light of this statement, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why the Weaver’s Cove site is on the short list of viable candidates for siting an overnight yard and is being subjected to continued study. The DEIS should clearly state that the Weaver’s Cove site will not be used as a layover yard location if the Weaver’s Cove LNG Facility is permitted, constructed and built. However, if the South Coast Rail Project and MDOT intend to pursue the WCE site for overnight yard locations, then the DEIS should explain what will happen should both the WCE and South Coast Rail Project move through the permitting process and go into construction. The DEIS should explain what will happen if South Coast Rail Project goes into construction before the Weaver’s Cove LNG Project and vice versa. The DEIS should describe how conflicts will be managed.</p>	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further consideration as an overnight layover facility site.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.48	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The ongoing permitting and development of the LNG terminal at the Fall River site is documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Certificate issued by FERC to WCE in 2005. That FEIS and Certificate issued to WCE are in the process of being modified to accommodate an offshore LNG vessel berth (applications made in 2008 – reviews pending). The US Coast Guard on July 30, 2009 issued a letter of recommendation supporting LNG vessel transits to this proposed berth. The permitting docket associated with the WCE Project (FERC Docket CP04-36 and the associate MEPA docket) reports that the entire WCE East Layover yard Property will be used as a construction staging area for the construction of the LNG Terminal. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss how the South Coast Rail project will accommodate this intended land use by WCE.</p>	<p>The WCE LNG project has been cancelled irrespective of the South Coast Rail project. See response to comment L-047.44</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.49	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>No detailed analysis is provided in the DEIS/DEIR showing how the siting of an overnight rail yard facility near existing residential neighborhoods (north, south and across the street from the facility in the case of the WCE East site) will impact residential property values. The DEIS/DEIR does report that property values will drop 20% within 400 feet of an overnight yard facility. The DEIS/DEIR should provide references to the studies that support this 20% claim and provide an explanation of why the distance is limited to 400 feet. An analysis should be provided to document what the negative impacts might be at distances in increments of 400 feet up to the point where there is no anticipated negative on property value. The factors that influence these estimates should be documented (visual, noise, traffic, etc.). It would appear that at least a simple analysis was completed to address the impact of station sites on real estate values. The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to address these issues for overnight yards and midday layover facilities. Commuter rail stations and overnight/midday rail layover facilities each serve drastically different functions and have drastically different impacts. A single study cannot possibly address both uses. An additional study effort should be completed and the results reported in a revised DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>The requested analysis is not required for an EIS. A summary discussion of property value impacts is provided in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 4.3, Socioeconomics. It is expected that property values near stations would increase while values along the rail line but distant from stations would decrease. Specific property value impacts near the layover facility sites were not calculated as such values are subject to multiple site-specific factors.</p>
L-047.50	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Section 4.3.3.3 of the DEIS/DEIR states that for the Fall River Secondary “No Business or Community Facility displacements would occur along the Fall River Secondary.” This statement is not true if the Fall River West Overnight Yard is selected as the overnight yard option. The DEIS/DEIR reports that all of the property west of the tracks owned by Weaver’s Cove will be taken in this option. Construction of the Fall River West Overnight Yard alternative would result in the shut down of the Fall River Office of Weaver’s Cove Energy. Ten (10) people are currently employed at that facility. They would have to relocate to another facility – most likely outside Fall River. This is yet another example of how the current version of the DEIS/DEIR fails to take into account site specific information.</p>	<p>See response to comment L-047.132.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.51	Weaver's Cove Energy	In section 4.3.3.3 the tax revenue loss from the development of the Fall River Secondary is listed. It is not clear if this tax revenue loss includes the revenue loss that would result from the acquisition of the site for the Fall River Line Overnight Yard facilities. The DEIS/DEIR should provide clarity and include the tax losses that will result from all elements of the Project (including the Midday Layover Facilities where not a single site has even been proposed).	Property tax income losses that would result from property acquisition requirements for the South Coast Rail project, including along the Fall River Secondary, Fall River Depot Station, Battleship Cove Station, and the Weaver's Cove East overnight layover facility, are provided in Chapter 4.3, Socioeconomics.
L-047.52	Weaver's Cove Energy	Every single station along the entire train and bus line is clearly delineated and studied in sufficient detail that MDOT has been able to state with certainty where the preferred stations are located. In order for the DEIS/DEIR to be deemed complete and adequate, the preferred alternative for each of the overnight yard locations should be similarly defined, analyzed, and selected. Since a preferred alternative has not been selected, one can conclude that the needed level of detailed study and analysis has not yet been completed for the overnight and midday yard locations. It seems inappropriate that a facility like a "rail station" that according the DEIS/DEIR will increase local property values has been selected, while at the same time the locations of the overnight yard facilities that will have a negative effect on local property values and have negative effects on abutting land owners (e.g., noise, visual, traffic, etc.) have not been studied, documented, and then selected prior to the publication of the DEIS/DEIR. Playing up the benefits of the project while downplaying and failing to study the negative effects of the project is inconsistent with the spirit of the NEPA and MEPA review processes and may be contrary to regulatory standards and requirements.	The layover facility site alternative selection process described in the DEIS/DEIR is summarized and incorporated by reference in the FEIS/FEIR; the selection of the two preferred alternative locations for the sites in Fall River and New Bedford is described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, Section 3.2.16, Layover Facilities. Accompanying figures depict the layover facility layouts based on the current level of design. The analyses described in Chapter 4, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, include evaluations of the layover facilities' potential impacts to the resources studied.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.53	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Section 4.3.12 (page 4.3-48) of the DEIS/FEIR states:</p> <p>“One midday train layover facility is planned for the Boston Area, but alternative sites have not been selected.”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should not be deemed adequate while it remains silent on the siting of the midday train layover facilities. The DEIS/DEIR document clearly states that midday layover capacity is required to make the South Coast Rail Project complete and functional. The DEIS/DEIR should scope alternative midday sites. Site specific data should be collected for each site considered including wetlands, noise, visual, air and other impacts. Neighbors bordering these facilities should be notified and asked to participate in the review process. The economic, environmental and operational efficiency of consolidating the midday and overnight facilities should be addressed as an alternative in the DEIS/DEIR.</p> <p>If midday layover facilities cannot be sited near Boston as is currently assumed, then presumably the midday trains will have to lay over at the overnight yards which are currently being proposed at a limited number of locations in Fall River and New Bedford at the other end of the line from Boston. If ideally located midday facilities cannot be located near Boston, the DEIS should consider how “deadheading” of trains could be reduced if the overnight yards were moved closer to Boston and those overnight yards served as both midday and overnight facilities. The deadheading analysis in the current DEIS only addresses the overnight yards. The DEIS should take a broader view of the deadheading issue and should seek to minimize deadheading and running nearly empty trains by considering both the Midday and Overnight facilities in a single combined study of this issue.</p>	<p>A mid-day layover facility will be identified in the South Station Expansion project. This project is separate and has independent utility from the South Coast Rail project. The South Station midday layover facility will serve multiple purposes and will also be able to accommodate the needs of the South Coast Rail project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.54	Weaver's Cove Energy	The assumptions behind the placement of the overnight yards have not been adequately tested and evaluated and the information in the DEIS/DEIR does not provide sufficient information to complete such an analysis. The feasibility of the major layover facilities have not been tested to the point of proving that any one of them is viable. A DEIS/DEIR that does not list a preferred alternative for both midday facilities and Fall River and New Bedford Overnight yards is not complete.	The layover facility site alternative selection process described in the DEIS/DEIR is summarized and incorporated by reference in the FEIS/FEIR; the selection of the two preferred alternative locations for the sites in Fall River and New Bedford is described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, Section 3.2.16, Layover Facilities. A mid-day layover facility will be identified in the separate South Station Expansion project, and would be used for the South Coast Rail project.
L-047.55	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The siting of the overnight yards is slated for Fall River and New Bedford in order to reduce the adverse operating costs of train deadheading. The DEIS quotes a number of roughly \$100,000 per year in operating cost for each mile that the overnight yard is moved north of the terminal stations (at the “end of the line”) in Fall River and New Bedford. This analysis is not complete as other economic factors are just as substantial and influential in the economics of yard selection. The analysis should include a long run economic analysis of all variable expenses and capital cost expenses that vary by overnight and midday yard locations. The DEIS should put the operating costs into context by considering and analyzing cost more broadly.</p> <p>The DEIS should address deadheading costs relative to project development costs such as overnight yard site acquisition costs, rail yard construction costs (they can’t be the same for each site), cut and fill costs, environmental remediation costs (capital and operating), etc. An economic analysis of the pros and cons of the various layover sites including both capital and operating costs should be presented in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	The value from the DEIS includes the cost to operate an additional mile plus the cost to maintain and additional mile of track. Revised costs are described in the Layover Facility Site Selection Report (Appendix 3.2-E)

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.56	Weaver's Cove Energy	An economic analysis should be completed to evaluate whether or not one single train overnight and midday yard facility located north of Fall River and New Bedford is preferable to the economic and environmental impacts of developing, constructing and operating three separate facilities (overnight yard in Fall River, overnight yard in New Bedford, midday facility at an unknown location) that serve roughly the same purpose. The environmental impacts of a single yard should be reduced because economies of scale would be achieved in operations when developing one slightly larger train storage site as opposed to three small ones. The DEIR/DEIS needs to address this concept. The current analysis is fractured into small components, many components are missing, and there is no comprehensive summary that supports a preferred alternative when compared to all the alternatives considered and all the factors (both economic and environmental) that should be considered.	The midday layover in Boston and the overnight layovers in New Bedford and Fall River do not serve the same purpose. The midday layover needs to be in or near Boston, where trains will be during the midday period. The midday layover will include maintenance of the vehicles. The overnight layovers would be located close to the end of the line to minimize deadhead miles.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.57	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The WCE West Site Layover facility analysis documented in the DEIS/DEIR reports that Parcel T-15-2 as shown on figure 4.2-56 will be taken if the Weaver's Cove West layover facility is built (it is part of the 57.91 acres that would be taken by South Coast Rail— see table 4.2-29 on page 4.2-49). The DEIS/DEIR should discuss why this entire parcel must be taken to support the development of the overnight yard. The DEIS should also report who owns Parcel T-15-2. WCE believes the parcel was subdivided many years ago and the local electric utility owns a portion of this parcel and WCE owns a portion of this parcel. The DEIS/DEIR fails to report that a 300 foot tall transmission tower sits on the Eastern corner of what is depicted as parcel T-15-2. This transmission tower will be in the shadow of WCE East and West layover locations. This tower carries two major regional electric transmission circuits across the Taunton River while keeping the wire 150 feet above the surface of the water. Since the rail project intends to take the land under the Transmission Tower, the DEIS/DEIR should report how the transmission tower is going to be relocated and where it is going to be placed. The DEIS/DEIR should address what impact the South Coast Rail Facilities will have on these electric grid facilities.</p>	<p>The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further consideration as an overnight layover facility location.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.58	Weaver's Cove Energy	If the South Coast Rail project does not intend to relocate the transmission tower, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how or why the presence of a 300 foot tall transmission tower that dominates the visual landscape was not addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. This type of oversight casts serious doubts as to whether MDOT has seriously considered how much land and in what locations that land is required to site the overnight facilities. This is why the overnight yard alternatives analysis report included in the appendix (see Appendix 3.2-E) is inadequate. Each alternative that is considered in that report should include a map showing parcels impacted, owners of those parcels should be listed and the layout of the facility should be depicted on figures drawn at a scale that wetland, cutting and grading work, land ownership and the location of rail facilities can be seen in detail. A quantitative analysis is needed instead of the simple set of guesses and hunches that are cobbled into a conclusion.	The transmission tower would not be relocated for the South Coast Rail project. An analysis of visual impacts for this action is not required. The parcels that would be required for the Weaver's Cove East site are identified in Chapter 4.2, Land Use and Zoning. Wetland impacts at the site are described in Chapter 4.16, Wetlands.
L-047.59	Weaver's Cove Energy	In the write up of the Weaver's Cove West Layover site, the DEIS/DEIR refers to a nearby cell phone tower. Perhaps MDOT is mixing up the 300 foot transmission tower (see comment above) with the cell phone tower. The location of the cell phone tower discussed in the DEIS/DEIR should be located on a map and that map should be included in the DEIR/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss why the location of the cell phone tower is significant and how it will be impacted by the project or how the project will impact the cell phone tower.	See response to comment L-047.58.
L-047.60	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR includes a table of contents. However, that table of contents does not include any listing of the appendices to the report. The DEIR/DEIS table of contents should include a listing of Appendices. Each report in the Appendix that runs more than a few pages should have its own table of contents.	A list of appendices will be provided in the table of contents of the FEIS/FEIR. A table of contents for each appendix is not necessary, each individual appendix is provided as a separate PDF file.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.61	Weaver's Cove Energy	The appendix containing the field noise measurements is nothing more than a rough set of largely hand written field notes that make little to no sense. This appendix should be reworked to include a description of the test methodology, maps of sampling locations, descriptions of how long the measurements were taken, descriptions of the test equipment, summaries of the data collected, and notes as to any abnormalities with regards to the data collected of the data collection process. The report should include a description of weather conditions (windy days tend to be noisier than calm days – on wet days road noise from tires increases) at the time the data was collected.	See response to comment L-047.60.
L-047.62	Weaver's Cove Energy	MDOT is treating the overnight facility inconsistently when compared to the midday layover facilities required. MDOT simply states (without justification) that the overnight facility must be located at the end of both the Fall River and New Bedford lines. Yet MDOT does not dictate that the midday facilities must be located in Boston in order to avoid the economic and environmental costs of deadheading trains between the Boston and the unspecified location of the midday facility. This discrepancy in the site selection process should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR.	The layover facility site alternative selection process described in the DEIS/DEIR is summarized but not reiterated in the FEIS/FEIR; the selection of the two preferred alternative locations for the sites in Fall River and New Bedford is described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, Section 3.2.16, Layover Facilities. A mid-day layover facility will be identified in the separate South Station Expansion project, and would be used for the South Coast Rail project.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.63	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The cost of deadheading trains is described as a key reason for locating the overnight yard as close to the terminus of the line as possible. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the impact of having several of the early morning trains leave the overnight yard and head north skipping any stations south of the overnight yard locations. This would have both a revenue impact (lost revenue – perhaps or maybe riders will have less selection as to departure times) and an operating cost savings (less deadheading expense). The impact of the revenue losses and cost saving should be addressed in the alternatives analysis associated with the location of the overnight yard facilities (a similar analysis should be completed with regards to the siting of the midday yard facilities). The DEIS/DEIR cannot simply “assume” or simply “dictate” that the costs associated with the moving the overnight yard several miles further to the north are unacceptable without providing an analysis explaining why having some trains miss stops at a few of the southernmost stations during the first day of the run is not acceptable. The analysis in Appendix 3.2-E of layover sites should be expanded to include this information. A robust and viable alternatives analysis does not simply assume the answer. More study is needed.</p>	<p>The preferred locations for the two overnight layover facilities are north of the stations in Fall River and New Bedford, the two communities specifically identified in the Project Purpose and Need as benefitting from the South Coast Rail project. It would not make sense to skip stopping at these stations.</p>
L-047.64	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Weaver’s Cove Energy LLC has been discussing a modified version of the WCE East Site terminal layout that would involve a land swap between the railroad and WCE. This land swap would make more contiguous waterfront land available to WCE (improving the viability of the WCE site as a DPA) and would have the advantage of removing a curve from the Fall River spur, an advantage for MDOT. This alternative should be documented and included in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>MassDOT appreciates the suggestions and will consider it if appropriate and practicable when the property acquisition phase of the project is initiated. At this time discussions have not advanced to the point where a project change is warranted.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.65	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>In Section 4.3.4.1 the construction impacts of the project are discussed for each rail section alternative. The same or very similar text is repeated for each segment of the project:</p> <p>“Based up the preliminary estimates of construction costs, the Corridor Plan suggests that “the total direct, indirect and induced economic effects within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of the rail alternatives would include about \$1.4 billion to \$1.8 billion in business output, which would in turn generate 6,800 -7,800 person-year jobs, and \$314-\$360 million in household income. “</p> <p>This text is used to describe the following alternatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attleboro Electric Alternative (see page 4.3-53)</li> <li>2. Attleboro Diesel Alternative (see page 4.3-57)</li> <li>3. Stoughton Electric Alternative (see page 4.3-58)</li> <li>4. Stoughton Diesel Alternative (see page 4.3-61)</li> <li>5. Whittenton Electric Alternative (see page 4.3-62)</li> <li>6. Whittenton Diesel Alternative (see page 4.3-65)</li> </ol> <p>It is not credible to suggest that each alternative has the exact same (and very large) impact on economic activity in the region. By laying out one single large impact, the DEIS/DEIR seems to imply that direct, indirect, and induced economic effects are independent of the project alternative that is ultimately selected. The DEIS/DEIR as drafted misses the point. An alternatives analysis is supposed to compare and contrast alternatives. The analysis in the DEIR/DEIR needs to be made more granular. DIFFERENCES in the economic impact between each of the six alternatives listed above should be analyzed and included in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should evaluate and discuss the economic impacts for each discrete alternative and should document differences between alternatives.</p> <p>This need for increased granularity applies equally to the analysis of the various bus route alternatives. It also defies logic that each bus route alternative would have the exact same impact on economic activity in the region. A more</p>	<p>The ranges provided in each metric are intended to accommodate the differences between the alternatives' expected economic impacts.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		detailed analysis is needed to support the selection of the best project alternative.	
L-047.66	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.3-69 under the heading “Summary of Impacts: Direct and Indirect Impacts” states:</p> <p>“The largest component of the property tax loss calculation is the \$40,410.88 estimate of loss for the Fall River Depot Station, an order of magnitude greater than for any other single project element except for the \$26,125.657 loss for the Mansfield station. Since the Fall River Station is common for all alternatives, this value dominates the total property tax loss calculation for all alternatives.”</p> <p>This analysis is incomplete and misleading. The reported property tax loss for the WCE West Overnight site is listed at \$236,119.79 (see Table 4.2-29 on page 4.2-49), the property tax loss for the WCE East Overnight site is listed at \$57,317.75 (see Table 4.2-28 on page 4.2-48), and the property tax loss for the ISP Overnight site is listed at \$29,955.86 (see table 4.2-30 on page 4.2-49). These overnight yard real estate tax losses are much larger in magnitude than those reached in the section of the DEIS/DEIR that summarizes tax revenue losses from the development of the entire project. The DEIS/DEIR should reconcile these inconsistencies and demonstrate that the inconsistencies do not invalidate other conclusions drawn in the DEIS/DEIR that rely on a subset of the same data set.</p>	<p>The property tax losses associated with all of the overnight layover facility alternatives was a factor in identifying the preferred locations, as discussed in Chapter 3, Alternatives. The Weaver's Cove West site and the ISP site have been dismissed from consideration as overnight layover facility locations.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.67	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“Impacts to land uses and social and economic environment from the layover facilities were excluded from this summary because sites have not been selected. Depending upon the selected layover facility site(s), land acquisition, property tax revenue loss, and residential and business development vary considerably by alternative.”</p> <p>These statements demonstrate that MDOT has not studied the overnight yard locations to same degree as the station locations. This makes it impossible for the public and regulatory agencies to draw valid conclusions about the potential impacts of the South Coast Rail Project. The potential impacts for the layover yards are significant and should be addressed in the DEIR/DEIS. The results from a comprehensive analysis of the layover site(s) will and should significantly influence which alternative is selected and whether or not the project should be allowed to proceed. It should also be noted that that when describing the layover sites, the term “site(s)” is used. This suggests that MDOT has not determined whether or not a single or three or more layover facilities may be required (see Comment above that addresses this issue). The DEIS/DEIR as drafted remains a seriously flawed document.</p>	FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives, describes the selection process used to identify the preferred locations for the overnight layover facilities, which were evaluated in full in the FEIS/FEIR.
L-047.68	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The comparisons and conclusions drawn from many of the tables in the DEIS are fragmented and in some cases are meaningless because effects of the overnight and midday yards are not included. Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <p>Table 4.3-40 on page 4.3-68  Table 4.3-41 on page 4.3-71  Table 4.3-41 on page 4.3-78</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should be updated to include overnight yard impacts.</p>	Analyses of the overnight layover facilities' potential impacts to all resources evaluated are provided in Chapter 4 of the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.69	Weaver's Cove Energy	Based on the discussion beginning at the bottom of pager 4.4-5 and ending on page 4.4-7, it appears that the Environmental Justice Analysis neglected to address impacts from the layover and midday facilities. The Environmental Justice Analysis in the DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to include midday and overnight layover facility impacts.	Chapter 4.4, Environmental Justice, evaluates the potential impacts to environmental justice populations which may result from the South Coast Rail project, including the overnight layover facilities.
L-047.70	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.4-20 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“Engineering plans for these facilities [the layover facilities] will be completed once the preferred sites have been selected.”</p> <p>The analysis that winnowed down the full listing of potential layover sites to a short list of three layover sites is flawed. The DEIS/DEIR concludes that three layover sites should be studied for the Fall River spur and two should be studied for the New Bedford spur. The impacts associated with alternative site layover locations can only be assessed after site specific conceptual designs have been developed.</p> <p>Factors that should be considered include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economics (see pertinent comments made above).</li> <li>2. Distance between sources (rail facility equipment) and sensitive receptors (houses, schools, etc.) with regards to: noise, vibration, visual impacts, air quality, traffic,</li> <li>3. the number of sensitive receptors that will be impacted near the site (the study includes no quantitative data)</li> <li>4. site specific mitigation techniques should be considered for each of the above impacts.</li> </ol> <p>Sufficient engineering analysis should be completed and reported in the DEIS/DEIR to document significant differences between the various sites considered. While completing this engineering work does cost money and take time, NEPA/MEPA policies and regulations demand that sufficient engineering work be done so the best sites can be selected and so the public can comment on the analysis and selection criteria.</p>	FEIS/FEIR Chapter 3, Alternatives, describes the selection process used to identify the preferred locations for the overnight layover facilities, which were evaluated in full in the remaining chapters of the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.71	Weaver's Cove Energy	Section 4.4.4 on page 4.4-48 lists the steps that were taken to reach out to environmental justice neighborhoods. In the future, all such communications should include overnight and midday yard locations. Abutters with 1000 yards of these facilities should be notified via mail.	Chapter 4.4, Environmental Justice, evaluates the potential impacts to environmental justice populations and includes a description of outreach efforts.
L-047.72	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should include a visual description of what the overnight and midday facilities will look like and include an artists rendition. The number, shape and size of support buildings should be described (profile drawings of the sites should be developed documenting elevations in addition to more detailed layout drawings) and the nature of the activities conducted in those buildings should be documented. Architectural embellishments and landscaping considered to improve visual impacts should be described.	Chapter 3, Alternatives, includes a narrative description of the layover facilities; accompanying figures depict the facilities' layouts, based on the current level of design.
L-047.73	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR should discuss where and when the following activities will take place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. trash removal from the trains</li> <li>2. water addition to the trains (where will it come from, how much?)</li> <li>3. sewage removal from the trains (how much, how will it be handled, where will it go, how will it be transported?)</li> <li>4. light and routine maintenance activities undertaken (describe them in some detail – overnight cleaning, painting, lubrication, etc.)</li> <li>5. heavy maintenance activities (describe them in some detail)</li> <li>6. employee parking facilities required (number of spaces where located)</li> <li>7. contractor parking facilities required (number of spaces and where located)</li> <li>8. temporary construction laydown areas that will be impacted</li> <li>9. loading of food service supplies.</li> </ol>	Chapter 3, Alternatives, includes a narrative description of the layover facilities; accompanying figures depict the facilities' layouts, based on the current level of design. Additional details will be developed as the project design is advanced.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.74	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR should discuss all of the activities that will be undertaken by the project while the trains are sitting in the midday and overnight facilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. expected traffic to and from facility</li> <li>2. expected staffing at the facility</li> <li>3. amount of stormwater runoff from facility, projected stormwater quality, the systems used to treat this water, the location where it will be discharged to the environment.</li> </ol>	As described in Chapter 4.1, Transportation, traffic impacts at the overnight layover facilities are expected to be minimal due to the low number of trips associated with the facilities. Stormwater impacts are described in Chapter 4.17, Water Resources.
L-047.75	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.5-15 of the DEIS/DEIR states that “this segment of the Taunton River has been designated as a ‘recreational river area,’ recognizing its aesthetic value and developed shoreline.” The DEIS/DEIR should report who made this designation and should explain what the standards to met for this designation is and how the Project complies with this designation. The standards that must be met in order to for the project to comply with this designation should be discussed and the accommodations made to ensure compliance should be reported. The regulatory review process associated with this designation should be described.</p>	The National Park Service is responsible for implementation of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, and made the designation for the Taunton River. The project's compliance with Wild & Scenic Rivers Act standards is provided in Chapter 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources.
L-047.76	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Later in the document the fact that the Taunton River has been designated as “Wild and Scenic” under the federal Wild and Scenic River Act (WSRA) is discussed. The DEIS/DEIR fails to report how the rail Project will comply with this designation of the river and it fails to describe the steps that will be taken to secure sign off from the Department of Interior that all elements of the project are consistent with the WSRA.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should explain how and why all elements of the project are consistent with the WSRA and all proposed or required mitigation measures should be discussed. The mitigation discussion should specifically address whether proposed mitigation is “in kind and in place” or if not “in kind in place” explain how the proposed mitigation addresses the project impact. The DEIS/DEIR is deficient in this regard and should be deemed inadequate.</p>	See response to comment L-047.75.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.77	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The description of each layover facility studied in Appendix 3.2-E and also in the body of the DEIS/DEIR should include the following facts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A table showing the number of residences near the layover facilities and how far away they are. A table showing number of residences within 400 feet, 600 feet, 800 feet and 1000 feet (measured from the closest edge of the layover facility boundary to the residence) should be reported.</li> <li>2. The distance to the closest church, hospital, school, nursing home, and other sensitive receptors should be reported.</li> <li>3. The presence of vegetation or other screening effects between the sites and receptors should be reported.</li> </ol>	<p>Sensitive receptor information is provided in Chapter 6, Noise, and Chapter 7, Vibration, and depicted on accompanying figures based on noise and vibration propagation distances from the railroad. A narrative description of screening effects is provided in Chapter 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.78	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>While the proposed commuter rail stations will be exposed to “transit noise and vibration impacts” as discussed in the Section 4.6 of the DEIS/DEIR, the layover facilities will experience a drastically different set of impacts. The trains will be housed at these facilities for extended periods of time and not simply passing through. An undefined number of workers will be servicing/cleaning/handling the trains at these locations. Hence the noise analysis required to assess the impact of the yards is drastically different than the noise analysis needed to assess passing trains. The noise analysis provided on page 4.6-36 for the overnight yard only accounts for a single idling train. This overly simple analysis fails to report the magnitude of the noise and vibration levels at the closest receptor. The analysis should be expanded to address the following additional factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The noise level of a train when it is gearing up to push a full set of cars from a standstill and is working to overcome standing friction.</li> <li>2. The noise emanating from squealing wheels as the trains pass through the switches into the various sections of the yard.</li> <li>3. The squealing of the brakes when the trains stop in the yard.</li> <li>4. The clanking of the rail switches in the yard as they are set from one position to another should be considered.</li> <li>5. The slamming of train couplings as the trains are hooked together.</li> <li>6. The noise levels from train maintenance activities should be addressed.</li> <li>7. The noise associated with any air compressors that will be installed on the site.</li> <li>8. The noise levels associated with any electric substation that will be installed</li> <li>9. The noise levels associated with any transformers.</li> </ol> <p>Cumulative noise impacts from all of these factors for the maximum number of trains that can be located on the overnight yard sidings should be considered because simply studying a single idling train paints an inaccurate and</p>	<p>The noise and vibration analyses described in Chapters 4.6 and 4.7, respectively, were conducted in accordance with FTA requirements, as appropriate.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		incomplete picture and is not sufficient.	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.79	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>A large number of trains will be pulling into and out of the overnight yard during early morning and late night hours. Background noise levels at sensitive receptors surrounding each alternative site should be measured. Both short term and week long data should be collected. Increases in noise levels above current background conditions should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR as well as their frequency and duration. The hours of day and night that these noises will be generated should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR.</p> <p>A similar analysis should be included in the DEIS/DEIR for the construction related noise impacts.</p> <p>The background noise data measured for the Project should be expanded to include sensitive receptor sites around specific layover facility locations. The hours of the day/night and at what locations around the background noise levels listed in table 4.6-9 on page 4.6-36 of the DEIS/DEIR should be documented. The measurement locations should be reported on a map that also shows the location of the sensitive receptors.</p> <p>It is not clear from the current write up in the DEIS/DEIR whether or not the few noise measurements that were taken were long term (days or weeks) or short term (minutes/seconds/hours). The weighting scale used to collect the measurements is not reported. The concept of a weighting scale is not even discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to include a background write up describing how noise measurements are collected and reported. The equipment used to collect the measurements should be reported. The last date that the equipment was calibrated should be reported. The weather conditions when the data was collected should be reported. The training of the individuals taking the noise measurements should be reported. Noise levels at night should be compared to noise levels during the day. Peak noise levels should be discussed. Average noise levels should be discussed and periods of low noise levels should be described. The DEIS/DEIS should</p>	<p>The noise analysis described in Chapter 4.6 takes into consideration changes in noise levels from ambient conditions as well as day and night time noise levels.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		describe the nature of the single noise impact associated with WCE West Layover site listed in Table 4.6-39 on page 4.6-36.	
L-047.80	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The above discussion focuses on operational noise. The DEIS/DEIR fails to include any meaningful analysis and discussion of construction related noise impacts. Along the linear expanse of the rail lines, construction noise impacts are generally temporary as the construction crews move down the line and do not remain in any one location a significant period of time. Even so, DEIS/DEIR should document how long each construction crew will be within range of a sensitive receptor and how much noise will be created and how loud it will be.</p> <p>The issue of construction noise impacts is more important for overnight yard and midday yard locations and as a result a more detailed analysis should be provided for yard sites. Construction impacts in a midday or overnight yard are of a longer duration – hence sensitive receptors are exposed for a longer period of time because more work is done over a longer period of time at a single site of a limited size than is typically case for rail line construction. The DEIS/DEIR should address the nature of the construction equipment that will be used in the yard, the number of pieces of noise generating equipment that will be used, how long they will be used and how many pieces of equipment will be operating at one point in time. The hours of day and night that the equipment will operate should also be reported.</p>	Construction period noise impacts are discussed in Chapter 4.6, Noise. The level of detail of the construction noise impact analysis is commensurate with the current level of design information available--information to support the detailed analysis requested by the comment is not available.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.81	Weaver's Cove Energy	It is not clear if the air quality emissions listed in Table 4.9-23 include the emissions from multiple trains running at the same time in the Layover facility. The applicant should model the maximum number of trains that will be operating in the yard at any one time. The location of each train modeled should be reported and the location of the closest sensitive receptors should be reported along with estimated air quality conditions at those receptors. The emissions study should address what happens when emissions spike as trains move from idling mode to actually pushing cars around the yard. The wind conditions that were modeled should be discussed. Downwash effects of local structures and topography should be reported.	Chapter 4.9, Air Quality, fully describes the emissions study conducted for the project.
L-047.82	Weaver's Cove Energy	Remediation of the WCE East and WCE West sites are the subject of a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) under the MCP. Construction of layover facility on either the Weaver's Cove West or East sites will involve making changes to the remediation system. The nature of the required modifications should be described. Site specific steps taken by MDEP to comply with PIP and MCP should be described in the DEIS/DEIR. Any MDOT actions undertaken at the site must comply with the Public Involvement Plan. The DEIS/DEIR should describe the PIP process and how the applicant plans to comply with that process. The project sponsor should be asked to directly contact the leaders of the PIP group to apprise them of this proposed development and notify them that PIP site is being considered as an overnight yard site.	Any remediation requirements for the Weaver's Cove East site would be conducted in compliance with the MCP, as described in Chapter 4.12, Hazardous Materials. The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further consideration as an overnight layover facility location.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.83	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Coastal Zone Management Act is implemented by Massachusetts under 301 CMR 20.00. The policy appendix to 301 CMR 20.00 is codified at 301 CMR 98. 301 CMR 98 (7) reads in part as follows:</p> <p>“PORTS POLICY #3. Preserve and enhance the capacity of Designated Port Areas (DPAs) to accommodate water-dependent industrial uses, and prevent the exclusion of such uses from tidelands and any other DPA lands over which a state agency exerts control by virtue of ownership, regulatory authority, or other legal jurisdiction.” Since the WCE West Layover facility is located on DPA land, the</p> <p>DEIS/DEIR should explain how the siting of this layover facility is going to demonstrate compliance with CZM Ports Policy #3. In particular, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the DPA land owned by WCE and being directly impacted by the overnight yard siting will be enhanced as a DPA by the development of an overnight yard on the property. The DEIS should report that failure to satisfy this Policy will prevent the issuance of the CZM approval by the State under Federal law and this would block the development of the project and the construction of the overnight yard on the WCE West site.</p>	Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, describes compliance with Ports Policies.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.84	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.18-3 of the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“New Nonwater-dependent use projects are permitted within Designated Port Areas (DPA), according to the waterways regulations at 310 CMR 9.32 (1) (b) (4). A detailed description of DPAs is provided in section 4.18.2.1.6”</p> <p>The referenced section (4.18.2.1.6) of the DEIS/DEIR does appear in the current version of the DEIS/DEIR. The section of the DEIS/DEIR that does address DPA issues fails to map the elements of the project that may rest in Designated Port Areas. Figure 4-18-1c is drawn at a scale that makes it difficult if not impossible to understand the impact of the Project on the Fall River DPA area near Battleship Cove. The boundary of the DPA land near the Battleship Cove area should be mapped and the land being utilized should be clearly depicted in the DEIS/DEIR. Land ownership within the DPA should be reported on a parcel by parcel basis.</p>	Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, describes compliance with Designated Port Area requirements. Accompanying figures correctly depict the project in relationship to DPAs.
L-047.85	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DPA drawing of the WCE site as depicted in Figure 4.18-1b only depicts the WCE East layover alternative. The labeling of Figure 4.18-1b should be corrected to clearly indicate that the layover facility depicted with shading on the drawing is the “East” WCE Layover Facility – the term “East” needs to be added to the descriptor. A new Figure that is referenced from the section of the DEIS/DEIR that directly addresses the DPA issue should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. This new figure should depict the Weaver’s Cove West Layover facility falling within the depicted Fall River DPA area. The drawing should include all the structures that MDOT intends to place on DPA land – layover facilities and any other facilities. The DEIS/DEIR indicates that Mass DOT intends to take the entire area of the WCE DPA (over 50 acres) should the West Layover Facility be selected.</p>	Updated figures are provided in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.86	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS should clearly articulate how 310 CMR 9.32(1) (b) (4) is being interpreted to allow the construction of non-water dependent facilities within a DPA (see reference on page 4.18-3). A more detailed interpretation and explanation of how the project elements will comply with DPA regulations and Massachusetts law should be included within the text of the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should report if this exemption for non water dependent uses applies equally to all elements of the project (stations, layover facilities, running track, bridges, etc.), or if its application varies from project element to project element. If the exemption only applies to particular facilities, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why this is the case.	Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, describes compliance with Designated Port Area requirements.
L-047.87	Weaver's Cove Energy	Some elements of the project are subjected to Chapter 91 jurisdiction, some elements of the project are subject to CZM jurisdiction, and some elements are subject to both. The DEIS/DEIR simply contains one generic listing of facilities that are subject to these three categories of review. For clarity the DEIS should separately list those elements of the project subject to CZM review. A separate list should identify those elements subject to Chapter 91 review. Finally a third list should identify those elements subject to both reviews.	Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, describes all elements of the South Coast Rail that are subject to Chapter 91 and Coastal Zone Management requirements.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.88	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>On page 4.18-8, the DEIS in Section 4.14.8 states that a:</p> <p>“more detailed review of the project’s compliance with the regulatory policies of the MCZMP is provided in section 4.14.8.”</p> <p>The current version of the DEIS/DEIR does not include a section 4.14.8. If this text is supposed to refer to section 4.18.5, beginning on page 4.18-31, this section should be expanded to discuss each element of the project separately. Each of the twenty program policies and nine management principles should be applied to each major element of the project that will be subject to CZM review. A table of all of these elements of the project subject to CZM review should be created.</p>	Chapter 4.18 describes the project's consistency with CZM policies and principles.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.89	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.18-8, the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“The continued use and anticipated replacement/upgrade or enhancement track within the Coastal Zone and DPAs is consistent with the regulatory policies of the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Plan. These improvements will maintain or enhance the capacity of the affected Coastal Zone and DPA to support marine based industry. A more detailed review of the project’s compliance with regulatory policies of the MCZMP is provided in Section 4.14.8.”</p> <p>Here again the reference is wrong and there is no explanation in the DEIS to document how the project supports marine based industry and the operation of the DPAs. Building rail road tracks into a DPA that has no rail could certainly could expand intermodal transport between ship and rail, but these facilities already exist today within the DPA so the addition of the tracks is neither new or an improvement.</p> <p>An overnight yard does not enhance intermodal transport – especially when alternative overnight yard locations are available outside the DPA. Building a train station or a layover facility within a DPA, when these facilities are clearly not water dependent and could be built elsewhere, does not maximize the utility of the limited acreage of DPA space available within the Commonwealth. The DEIS/DEIR should clearly articulate how the project supports marine based industry. In particular, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the siting of the layover facilities on the land owned by WCE will enhance WCE’s ability to site a marine based LNG import terminal at that site.</p>	<p>As discussed in Section 4.18.6 the only facilities within the DPAs would be the existing active freight rail tracks. None of the stations or layover facilities would be within a DPA, and none of these facilities would affect the capacity of the adjacent DPAs to support marine based industry. The project would improve the condition and function of the freight rail tracks and would improve the capacity of freight rail to support the marine-based industry in both New Bedford and Fall River.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.90	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR reports that the filled tideland areas were defined based on GIS data provided by MassGIS and Massachusetts MDEP (see bottom of page 4.18-3). The DEIS/DEIR should clearly reference the specific documents or data sources that were used to define the historic mean high water line markings within these GIS layers. The DEIS/DEIR should specify what data was entered into the GIS program to define the historical shoreline. If historical maps were used to set the historic shoreline in the GIS layer, the specific maps used at each specific location should be cited. The scale of these original maps should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR and the DEIS/DEIR should report whether or not these original maps were drawn before or after the original rail line was installed.	Section 4.18.3 and figures throughout the section provide specific references to data sources used to define filled tidelands.
L-047.91	Weaver's Cove Energy	The issue of the location of historical high water lines is also discussed on page 4.18-25. The two historic maps used to fix the shoreline should be entered into the record and posted in the FEIS. These 1865 and 1874 documents cover very large areas on such small maps that precise shoreline determinations are very difficult if not impossible to determine. The shoreline on the 1865 drawing often does not match the shoreline depicted in the 1874 drawing – even when it is clear that there had been no filling between the time the two maps were created. More localized and more detailed drawings with higher resolution often conflict with these larger area drawings near the Weaver's Cove site. A number of historic Chapter 91 drawings for structures along the shoreline in the area of Weaver's Cove provide a more precise indication of the location of the historic shoreline. These references should be utilized.	Section 4.18.3 and Figures 4.18-24 and 4.18-25 (which are based on the two historic maps referenced) provide specific references to data sources used to define filled tidelands. Copies of maps were provided to the Corps.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.92	Weaver's Cove Energy	The proposed rail crossing of the Taunton River (the “Taunton River Crossing”) is shown in Figure 4.18- 2a and discussed on page 4.18-10 where the expansion of the bridge is briefly described as single track crossing. The DEIS/DEIR should substantiate its claims that navigation on the river will be improved by replacing wooden piles with concrete piles and with a wider two track span. An apparent conflict in the DEIS/DEIR as to the number of tracks that will span the river also needs to be resolved. Page 4.18-19 lists all the Taunton River Bridges as single track crossings. Other descriptions describe a double track crossing.	The replacement bridges over the Taunton River are described in Section 4.18.3. The new bridges would improve navigation by replacing multi-span structures with single or two-span structures, minimizing obstructions to boats.
L-047.93	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should describe the surface area of river bottom consumed by the wooden piles being removed versus the surface area covered by the new concrete piles. The DEIS/DEIR should report if there will be a net reduction or net increase in impacted river bottom. This same type of analysis and type of data should be reported for each bridge crossing and every element of in water work.	The surface area occupied by the existing structures' piles has not been determined. It is assumed that the piles required for single or two-span structures would consume less surface area than those required for the existing multi-span structures.
L-047.94	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should explicitly address how the free flow of the river will be impacted by changes to structures in the Taunton River. The DEIS/DEIR should explain how navigation on the river is improved if the vertical clearance between the water surface and bottom of the bridge span is decreased by 7.5 inches. The DEIS/DEIR should explain what designation (Scenic, Recreational, other) the National Park Service has placed on each segment of the river where in water work or work adjacent to the river will take place.	Wild and Scenic River Act issues are discussed in Section 4.10.4.4.
L-047.95	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should address how the new bridge will not have an adverse impact on any of the outstanding resource values (ORV) associated with affected section of the river as defined under the Wild and Scenic River Act. The DEIS/DEIR should list each specific ORV.	Potential impacts to the Wild and Scenic River status of the Taunton River are described in Chapter 4.10.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.96	Weaver's Cove Energy	Page 4.18-19 of the DEIS/DEIR refers to Figure 4.18-5e and states that the Taunton River crossing will involve replacing three bridges with new single track crossing. The DEIS/DEIR should include a detailed analysis of how each Bridge complies with the Wild and Scenic River Act. Many of the river crossings associated with the Project involve crossing of rivers that flow into the Taunton River. Since these rivers are tributaries to the Taunton River, the DEIS/DEIR should address how these elements of the project comply with the Wild and Scenic River Act. As a part of this analysis, the DEIS/DEIR should report on potential impacts to anadromous fish. The DEIS/DEIR should document any proposed steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate construction and operational impacts including underwater noise impacts to migrating fish or to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts associated with turbidity arising from in water work or from storm water flowing off the bridges into the river. The same Wild and Scenic River analysis should be incorporated in the DEIS/DEIR for the busway route which follows Route 24 over the Taunton River.	Potential impacts to the Wild and Scenic River status of the Taunton River are described in Chapter 4.10.
L-047.97	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS should provide the scientific data that the Department of Interior will rely upon to complete a “Section 7” determination that the various project elements are in accord with the Wild and Scenic River Act. The Wild and Scenic River act has been documented to stop a number of the bridge development projects across the country.	Information to support a Section 7 determination is provided in Section 4.10.4 and has been submitted to the National Park Service.
L-047.98	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should explain how the movement of commuter rail passengers into and out of Battleship Cove station will improve the capacity of the Designated Port Area in which it is to be constructed. The station is a non-water dependent use that could and should be located outside the DPA.	The proposed Battleship Cove Station is not located within a DPA. The movement of commuter rail passengers (anticipated 210 total boardings per day) is unlikely to affect the capacity of roads within the DPA to serve maritime commerce.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.99	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page 4.18-25 the DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“The used of the site [Weaver’s Cove Energy East Layover Site] for layover needs is expected to be classified by DEP as a nonwater dependent Infrastructure Facility (310 CMF 9.55). This classification may waive some of the above references provisions, as long as feasible mitigation or compensation measures are provided such as the protection of maritime commerce or recreation and associated public access, reduction of flood and erosion-related hazards on lands subject to 100-year flood or projected sea level rise, and the attainment of water quality goals.”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should list specifically which of the “referenced provisions” will be exempted. The impact that these exemptions have on the project should be described. The DEIS/DEIR should list the specific mitigation that will be applied to bring the project into compliance and the potential impacts associated with implementing that mitigation should be reported. The DEIS/DEIR should report whether “in place and in kind” mitigation is being proposed or will the mitigation be implemented in areas miles away from the layover facility and not replicate the same type of resources that are being impacted. The DEIS/DEIR should address what impacts might flow from the required mitigation programs that might be considered.</p>	<p>As documented in Section 4.18.3, the proposed Weaver’s Cove East Layover Facility is a non-water dependent use. No exemptions are proposed.</p> <p>No mitigation or compensation measures are proposed.</p> <p>No mitigation or compensation measures are proposed.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.101	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The statements about WCE's waterfront parcels on page 4.18-25 during the description of the WCE West Layover site and public access to the waterfront area is confusing, inaccurate, and not supported by any facts in the DEIS/DEIR. The text states:</p> <p>“However, there are some areas of the site where informal public access seems to be achieved, namely the northernmost vegetated portion via a series of pathways off of North Main Street.”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should define what is meant by “informal public access.” The informal access route should also be mapped in the DEIS/DEIR. If the informal access route involves crossing an active rail line, the DEIS/DEIR should explain the specific rights the public has to make such a crossing of an active rail line in an area where there is no crossing agreement. If the route includes crossing privately held land, the DEIS/DEIR should document the rights that the public has to cross private property. WCE's property (including the wooded area described) is regularly patrolled by security staff and public access is not allowed to the waterfront area across lands owned by Weaver's Cove and this should be reported in the DEIS/DEIR. WCE is not aware of any public crossing of the railroad in the vicinity of the WCE parcel that would provide any legal access by the public to the waterfront area in question. The only access that we are aware of to the waterfront area in question is via the Taunton River and boat. The reported pathways off North Main Street to the waterfront need to be documented in a map. This is true not only for the WCE site but in other cases where similar descriptions are made within the FEIS/DEIR regarding access to other waterfront areas by the public.</p>	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further evaluation as a layover facility site.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.102	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>On page 4.18-29 of the DEIS/DEIR a statement is made as to what constitutes “Maintenance and Repair” as defined by 310 CMR 9.22(1). A portion of the regulation is quoted and then the following statement is made:</p> <p>“This is interpreted to mean that repair, replacement, and maintenance activities may be permitted to restore the serviceability of tracks, bridges, culverts, etc. provided that the work does not include addition of new tracks within the jurisdictional area not contemplated by the original license.”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to explain why the interpretation above is consistent with the regulations. The full text of the regulation clearly states if the facility is “enlarged” a new license is required. The DEIS/DEIR should explain why the number of tracks is determinative as to whether or not a new permit is required as the plain text of the regulation leads to a different conclusion. A facility is enlarged when the footprint of the impacted area increases. The footprint of the area impacted can increase even when the number of tracks does not increase. The DEIS/DEIR should explain why conceptual level design drawings are not needed to determine if a new license is or is not required because such drawings would enable the reader to access impacts from the changes being made to the rail system and the footprint of that system.</p>	As documented in Section 4.18.4, the Weaver’s Cove East Layover Facility is anticipated to require a new Chapter 91 License.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.103	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>On page 4.18-29 a statement is made describing what constitutes a “Minor Project Modification” as defined by 310 CMR 9.22(3). A portion of the regulation is quoted:</p> <p>“Structural alternations which are confined to the existing footprint of fill and structures being altered and which represent an insignificant deviation from the original license specification in terms of size, configuration, materials, or other relevant design or fabrication parameters”</p> <p>and then the following statement is made:</p> <p>“In the case of authorized jurisdictional crossings that are determined by DEP to be jurisdictional, minor modifications may typically be obtained for work that a) reduces or maintains the footprint of existing fill or structures; and b) maintains or increases the space available for navigation.”</p> <p>The document then states:</p> <p>“The jurisdictional analysis conducted to date includes a preliminary assess of non-tidal river and stream crossings. Additional field investigation is required to clarify the potential jurisdiction of many of these crossings. Crossing (SIC) determined to be jurisdictional will be reviewed for approval as maintenance, repair or minor modification.”</p> <p>The permitting requirements for each crossing should proposed by the applicant and that information should be included in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR cannot be deemed complete if the permitting plans for each element of the project cannot be determined. If additional analysis needs to be completed, it should be completed before the DEIS/DEIR is published. The document does not even list the number of river crossing that are being proposed. The document fails to define which crossing are and are not jurisdictional under the CZM and Chapter 91 programs. More work is required to complete the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's permit requirements for non-tidal river and stream crossings is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.104	Weaver's Cove Energy	In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 requirements within DPAs. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.34 speaks to compliance with Municipal Harbor Plans. A reference should be provided to Fall River's Approved and Final Municipal Harbor Plan. If an approved plan exists, the DEIS/DEIR should reference it. The agencies that have approved the plan (city and state government?) should be clearly described in the DEIS/DEIR and include same in the appendices. If the plan has been approved by the Department of Commerce as part of the approved CZM plan, the document memorializing the Department of Commerce's approval of that plan should be referenced. If the plan has not be finalized and fully approved under CZM regulatory requirements and instead only exists in draft or development form, the DEIS/DEIR should explain why a draft and unapproved plan is determinative in CZM permitting issues and why the draft plan is enforceable under the CZM program.	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's impact on Designated Port Areas and Municipal Harbor Plans is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.
L-047.105	Weaver's Cove Energy	In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.37 speaks to Engineering and Construction Standards. The standards that will be used for the construction of the facilities should be listed in the DEIS/DEIR. Different elements of the project will be built to different standards. The DEIS/DEIR should describe which standards apply to each of the discrete elements of the Project. The DEIS/DEIR fails to even explain how many elements of the project and which elements of the project are subject to jurisdiction. More work is required to complete the DEIS/DEIR.	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with Chapter 91 requirements is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.106	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.38 speaks to Use standards for Recreational Boating Facilities. The DEIS/DEIR states that no recreational boating facility enhancements will be constructed as part of the project. This implies that none of the mitigation associated with the project will include the addition of, or improvements to, recreational boating facilities. This is a clear example of why the mitigation associated with the Project must be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR.</p> <p>The mitigation contemplated to ensure compliance with the Wild and Scenic River Act needs to be described in the DEIS/DEIR. The Taunton River was designated as a Wild and Scenic River due at least in part to outstanding “recreational” values. It is therefore plausible, that some type of recreational facility improvements will be included in the ultimate mitigation package. Chapter 91 will apply to these “recreational” mitigation works and a discussion of such should be included in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	<p>An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, and in Chapter 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources. The South Coast Rail project would not include enhancements to recreational boating facilities; mitigation measures are not required. The bridges over the Taunton River that would be replaced would likely, based on preliminary design, include fewer pilings than the current bridges, improving boating access to this reach of the river.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.107	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 Basic requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.38 speaks to Dredging and Dredge Material Disposal. The DEIS/DEIR reports that the project will not include any dredging or dredge material disposal. The DEIR/DEIS should affirmatively state that during all bridge construction elements of the project and all near shore track work, no sediments will be removed from any river or any water body. If, on the other hand, sediments are to be removed anywhere from below the water surface, this constitutes dredging – and dredging permits and dredging review is warranted. If sediments are to be removed, the location and extent (volumes removed, acreage impacted) of the dredging should be documented, removal techniques should be discussed, and timing of the work clearly articulated in the DEIS/DEIR. This would include the removal of in water sediments using equipment that is staged from land. Dredging occurs whenever in water sediments are removed and dredge permitting requirements cannot be bypassed simply because the equipment doing the work is staged from land or does not resemble a clamshell or hydraulic dredge (dredging can be done from a backhoe staged from land).</p> <p>In most dredging operations, the timing of the work must be controlled by the imposition of dredge windows to ensure work is timed to protect fish populations. If any sediments are removed from below the water line, dredging is being conducted and the potential impacts and mitigation should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR and the required permitting steps should be described.</p> <p>While it is possible, it does seem odd that for a project of this magnitude and with the number of river crossings and water body crossings, that no dredging will be conducted.</p>	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with Chapter 91 basic requirements is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.108	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR should discuss bridge construction techniques. For example, if coffer dams will be created with sheet pile placement in the water, the construction techniques should be discussed and methods used to dewater the coffer dam should be addressed. Potential impacts from in water construction activities should be addressed. The species of fish that might be impacted and the steps taken to protect those species should be discussed in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should demonstrate that in-water work will be timed to avoid impacts to the various life stages of aquatic species and should describe construction techniques to avoid and minimize impacts.</p>	<p>Bridge construction techniques are outlined in the Construction Staging Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-F), but will be developed in detail during the final design phase. Several of the bridges are multi-span and will require in-water construction of piers. The Hockomock Swamp Trestle Memorandum (Appendix 3.2-C) provides a detailed description of construction techniques for the trestle.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.109	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>In Table 4.18-12 a reference is made to compliance with Chapter 91 Basic requirements. The description of Regulation 310 CMR 9.55 addresses compliance with the Standards for Nonwater-dependent Infrastructure Facilities. The DEIS/DEIR needs to be expanded to specifically identify which elements of the project are water dependent and which elements of the project are not. The DEIS/DEIR should clearly state the regulatory approval path that is being sought for each element of the project. Each element of the project should be listed in a table and the regulatory review standards that apply to each element should be reported.</p> <p>Those elements of the project that are water dependent must meet a different set of regulatory standards than those that are not water dependent. NEPA and MEPA are designed to make sure that all the regulatory agencies and the public have a firm foundation based on the facts prior to the initiation of detailed permitting efforts. Which permitting path is implemented on each element of the project will determine the nature and amount of mitigation that is required to satisfy the regulatory requirements.</p> <p>If mitigation is required, the nature of the mitigation and its potential positive and negative impacts should be part of the regulatory review and reported in the DEIS/DEIR. That is why the Chapter 61 findings are an essential part of completing the MEPA process. Section 61 findings can only be completed once the nature of the mitigation required is well understood and the need for the mitigation can only be understood based on an understanding of how each element of the project will be permitted. Simply put, these issues need to be resolved when the project is still subject to ongoing MEPA review with its public input process being allowed to function.</p>	Chapter 4.18 provides information on all components of the project requiring Chapter 91 licensing, and whether they are water-dependent.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.110	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The statement at the top of page 4.18-3 demonstrates that a fundamental flaw in the review process exists in the current version of the DEIS/DEIR:</p> <p>“Additional field investigations and consultations with Massachusetts DEP is required to clarify the potential jurisdiction at many of these crossings.”</p> <p>Additional field investigations and site specific data should have been collected and analyzed before the DEIS/DEIR was issued. MDOT should explain in the DEIS/DEIR the regulatory path they intend to pursue to secure the required approval to build every element of the project. The regulatory agencies and the public reviewing the DEIS/DEIR can then comment on the adequacy of these permitting and approval approaches. The need for additional work in this regard is evident not only for the river crossings but for each discrete element of the Project.</p>	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with Chapter 91 requirements is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91. A complete account of the project's compliance with all regulatory requirements is provided in Chapter 8, Regulatory Requirements.
L-047.111	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Section 4.18.5 on page 4.18-31 takes a broad brush approach to proving that the entire project meets the Coastal Zone Management requirements. The CZM program and policies only apply to specific elements of the Project. Section 4.18.5 should be much more granular and should apply each of the listed standards to each element of the project that is subject to CZM jurisdiction. (see Comment above –each element of the project subject to CZM review should be listed in a table). For example how does the Weaver’s Cove West Layover Facility comply with Ports Policy #3 when viable sites for this element of the Project exist outside the DPA boundaries? The DEIS/DEIR only addresses Ports Policy #3 (on page 4.18-35) for the Battleship Cove Station element of the project. By failing to conduct an element by element review, the current draft of the DEIS has failed to capture the full impact of the all the CZM policies and mandates.</p>	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with Coastal Zone Management requirements, including all Ports Policies, is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91. Note that the Weaver's Cove West site for the Fall River Secondary layover facility has been dismissed from further consideration.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.112	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should address how the construction of layover facilities and commuter rail stations within the boundaries of a DPA meet CZM Ports Management Principle #1. The discussion should address the fact that viable alternatives outside DPA boundaries for the layover and commuter rail station elements of the project are available to the project and are feasible.	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with CZM Ports Management Principles is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.
L-047.113	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR states on page 4.18-35:</p> <p>“The use of existing, active rail segments with the Coastal Zone does not preclude the development of any proposed public access paths in this area.”</p> <p>This statement should be qualified to state that the Project will not preclude the use of any existing public use where a legal right to cross the railroad right of way exists today and where trespass is not involved. (See prior Comments on this issue) The DEIS/DEIR should report where each of the public access paths to the waters subject to Coastal Zone Management jurisdiction are located. Maps should be provided showing where and how access is provided. Usage levels of these pathways should be detailed in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's impact on public access to coastal areas is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.
L-047.114	Weaver's Cove Energy	As stated in one of the above comments, mitigation implemented to address the unavoidable environmental impacts of this Project may involve improvements to public access to the waterway. If public access improvements will or may ultimately be included in the mitigation plan, they should be addressed under MEPA through the Section 61 findings. The impact of these mitigation plans on CZM Public Access Management Principle #1, 2, 3 and 4 needs to be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR.	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's impact on public access to coastal areas is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91. Section 4.18.6.7, Public Access, describes the project's compliance with the Public Access Policies.
L-047.115	Weaver's Cove Energy	If this project adversely impacts the development of the WCE LNG import terminal, this Project will have an impact on CZM Energy Policy #1 (see page 4.8-36 of the DEIS/DEIR). This issue should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR. The LNG facility is a proposed coastally dependent energy facility.	The WCE LNG project has been cancelled; the South Coast Rail project would not impact the facility. The project's compliance with the Energy Policies is described in Section 4.18.6.8, Energy, of Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.116	Weaver's Cove Energy	Appendix 3.2-E - Layover Facility Alternatives Analysis simply assumes that using the same facilities to layover midday and evening trains in a single facility makes no sense. The DEIS/DEIR should include a technical and economic analysis to support this view. Both capital and operating costs of the alternatives should be considered. The impact of layover facility location on ridership and revenue should be addressed in light of tradeoffs associated with deciding to deadhead select early morning trains versus simply letting some other trains run north bypassing one or more stations located south of the overnight layover facility.	The overnight layover facilities proposed for the South Coast Rail project, at the Weaver's Cove East and Wamsutta sites in Fall River and New Bedford, respectively, are described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, of the FEIS/FEIR. A mid-day layover facility, in the Boston metropolitan area, will be selected during the South Station Expansion project, a separate project with independent utility. The mid-day layover facility is not analyzed in this FEIS/FEIR. The same facilities would not be used for both mid-day and overnight layover.
L-047.117	Weaver's Cove Energy	On page D-2 of Appendix 3.2-E, the statement is made that the cost to the MBTA of operating a commuter rail train in 2007 was \$10 per revenue mile. The report then assumes that the cost of moving a train per non-revenue mile is \$7.50. The DEIS/DEIR should include an analysis to support this assumption. The analysis should itemize the costs that are included in the estimate cost of moving a train one non-revenue mile in a deadheading operation. Variable and fixed costs should be identified. Overhead costs should be identified.	Operating and maintenance costs were based on information from the National Transit Database. The cost to operate a commuter rail vehicle was \$11.92 per mile in 2010. There are no operating difference between revenue and non-revenue miles. Details on the operating cost assumptions for layover selection can be found in Layover Facility Site Selection Report (Appendix 3.2-E)
L-047.118	Weaver's Cove Energy	The conceptual layout drawings included in Attachment A of Appendix 3.2-E are plotted at a scale that renders them nearly useless in assessing the viability of any site for a layover yard. The drawings should be re-plotted at a scale where more detail is shown. Property lines should be shown. Owners of the properties should be identified. Key nearby features such as sensitive noise receptors and areas needing cut and fill should be recorded.	Updated figures are provided in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.119	Weaver's Cove Energy	The Overnight facility alternatives evaluated in Appendix 3.2-E do not clearly show the boundaries of the entire Fall River/Freetown Industrial Estate (the one that includes the Stop and Shop facility and the one that will be serviced by the new highway interchange on Route 24 that is currently under construction). The Appendix should be modified to include a clear drawing with the boundaries of the entire industrial estate superimposed on an aerial photograph of this estate. Siting an overnight rail yard facility inside this industrial estate would be compatible with local land uses. The current alternatives report does not even recognize the existence of this industrial estate, an effort that is being spearheaded by local government bodies.	Updated figures are provided in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-047.120	Weaver's Cove Energy	The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E evaluated layover yard locations south of Battleship Cove (beyond the last proposed station) in Fall River. The old rail line heading south of Battleship Cove at one time ran down into Rhode Island and onto Aquidneck Island. MDOT should expand Appendix 3.2-E to consider layover yard locations in Tiverton, Rhode Island or even further south. The current layover yard alternatives analysis report clearly states that sites beyond a given mileage south of the terminus are preferable to those located the same mileage north of the terminus (as the southerly locations don't involve turning the trains around before taking them to the overnight yard). If locations as far as nine miles north of Fall River Depot were considered, then locations roughly the same distance down the old rail line heading south into Rhode Island should be evaluated in the alternatives analysis.	A sufficient range of potential layover sites were studied, examining additional sites in Rhode Island is not necessary as sites closer to the terminal stations are practicable.
L-047.121	Weaver's Cove Energy	The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E does not state if there is an advantage to having the overnight layover facility on the east or the west side of the right of way. This issue should be addressed in the report.	There is no operational advantage to having the overnight layover facility on one side of the tracks or the other.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.122	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E states that incremental train variable operating costs are only \$90,000 per year per mile when the layover yard is located away from the terminus of the line (the last station to the south). This number is used to justify the selection of sites close to the line terminus in Fall River and New Bedford. Proper economic analysis of long lived assets requires that consideration be given to other costs such as capital costs of the building the facilities and the differential operating costs differences between operating the layover yard at different locations. In this proposed approach, capital cost differences between building the layover yard at one location versus another should be considered.</p> <p>For example the amount of grading that must be done at each of the sites considered in the Appendix 3.2-E report should be estimated and typical cost for one yard of excavation and one yard of fill should be estimated and these figures used to estimate the grading cost for each site. Similar differential capital costs should be estimated for other construction activities at each site. Only with this more complete cost data set can the figure of \$90,000 per year per mile be deemed significant in terms of layover site selection.</p>	All layover yard alternatives considered would have similar infrastructure and would have negligible difference in cost. Capital cost estimates were not used in the layover facility alternatives analysis.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.123	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Page D-17 of Appendix E-3.2 states that the WCE East property “does not have any permanent improvements proposed as part of the LNG terminal proposal.” This is not true. This site will house a new high pressure interstate natural gas pipeline designed to transport natural gas from the LNG facility to natural gas consumers throughout New England. The proposed layover site is also the site of a proposed wetlands mitigation area that is now a firm commitment made by WCE in the MEPA review process for the LNG project. WCE also has plans to use rights it holds in an existing “at grade” crossing from its property East of the track to gain access to the lands it owns West of the tracks. This will provide an alternative entrance to the site that will be available in special circumstances should the primary entrance not be available. It also is possible that the ongoing permitting of the LNG facility may require some design changes that may result in some of the LNG facilities moving from East side of the tracks to the West side of the tracks. As an example, existing water injections wells associated with the environmental remediation of the property may have to be moved to the East side of the tracks or additional wells may have to be added East of the tracks. These use conflict issues need to be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR for the South Coast Rail Project.</p>	<p>The WCE LNG project has been cancelled; the South Coast Rail project would have no impact to the LNG terminal.</p>
L-047.124	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Appendix 3.2-E and the DEIS/DEIR fail to take into account the willingness of the landowner to sell land to the railroad. This is one factor that should be considered in selecting the siting of any Project facilities.</p>	<p>Property acquisition requirements and procedures are summarized in Section 3.2.17. Property Acquisition, of Chapter 3, Alternatives. A detailed discussion of land acquisition requirements is provided in Chapter 4.2, Land Use and Zoning.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.125	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E evaluates layover site number 4 on the Fall River line. The DEIS/DEIR states:</p> <p>“The site would not be large enough to accommodate a layover facility without acquiring a portion of the Fall River Country Club.”</p> <p>The small 1.5 inch by 3 inch drawings included in the report make it is impossible to tell how much land would have to be acquired, where that land is located, and whether or not it is in active use by the country club or if it is idle land sitting down gradient from the golf course which sits above the tracks. The amount and location of the land that might have to be taken from the country club should be reported and a figure should be included that clearly delineates the existing railroad land, the boundaries of the country club land, and the location of the land that would need to be taken to make Site 4 viable. The report also talks about a need to excavate cuts to achieve the necessary grading of the layover track. This would tend to place the facility in a depression out of the view of the neighbors and the club – an excellent visual mitigation tool and noise screening tool. The report should discuss the benefits of this visual and noise mitigation.</p>	<p>Updated figures are provided in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR. Layover Facility Site Number 4, North Fall River, has been dismissed from further evaluation.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.126	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E discussed a number of layover facilities that were not large enough to accommodate the full number of sidings desired and were eliminated early in the review process. If two or three trains worth of capacity is available at a location south of Fall River Depot, the DEIS/DEIR should discuss the feasibility of building two smaller overnight facilities. One located in the ideal location and the other in a less optimal site farther to the north. While the report says a split yard arrangement using multiple sites is not desirable, no quantitative justification or evidence is provided to support this conclusion. The DEIS/DEIR should be expanded to discuss this option. Economic impacts of a split facility should be addressed and compared to the operating improvements achieved by having some of the trains stored overnight in what the report describes as an ideal location that is simply a bit too small to house all of the trains. The uses of the land surrounding the small site should be described – the properties should be depicted on an appropriately scaled map. Much of the commentary and conclusions drawn in the report in Appendix 3.2-E would be clearer if maps were include showing the properties in question and the location of the facilities in questions. These maps should have labels that tie the visuals to the text.</p>	<p>A split yard arrangement would require duplicative support buildings and overnight crews, resulting in inefficiency and a higher overall cost than a single layover facility. Parcel lines have been added to the figures in the Layover Facility Site Selection Report (Appendix 3.2-E) for clarity.</p>
L-047.127	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E should discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the amount of parking required,</li> <li>2. the size of the maintenance shop,</li> <li>3. the activities that will take place in the maintenance shop,</li> <li>4. the amount of storage space required for maintenance equipment,</li> <li>5. the hazardous and petroleum products that must be stored on the site and the volume of those materials stored.</li> <li>6. etc.</li> </ol>	<p>The requirements for an overnight layover yard are detailed in Section 3.2.16.1, of Chapter 3, Alternatives. The overnight layovers will not accommodate any vehicle maintenance; all maintenance will be provided at facilities in Boston.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.128	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E states that the amount of site grading is a significant issue to be considered in evaluating alternative sites. To address this issue in a quantitative fashion, a map with site contours should be provided for each of the alternatives considered. The amount of filling and cutting should be estimated and rough cost estimates for this work provided as part of the capital cost estimating effort that will identify the relative capital cost of constructing and operating one facility at each of the locations listed in the report.</p> <p>This analysis should include an estimate of the cost of building site access roads – some sites were dismissed because of the length of the access roadway – and the estimated cost of building the roadway and gaining access to the site. Using logic one might conclude that a parcel that requires a long access road would cost much less to acquire than a parcel that has easy access to public roadways. If the cost of a roadway is going to be used to dismiss a site, the cost of acquiring that site should be taken into account as well. Similarly, Site 4A is laid out on railway owned property yet was dismissed due to grading and the long length of a site access road. If less land has to be acquired to site the yard, the land acquisition cost for that option should be lower. This could in turn save funds that could then be used to do the required grading. The cost of acquiring property to develop the other sites should be compared to the cost of the roadway and the cost of the grading. To contemplate site selection a complete set of economic factors need to be considered – a limited subset of factors will lead to improper site selection. From an economic point of view, a site that is isolated and requires a long roadway should cost less to acquire than a site with ready access to the public road system. In an efficient market the price of the property will be influenced by the cost of building a roadway into the property. The layover site alternatives analysis should be expanded to more comprehensively address the economic and revenue advantages and disadvantages of one site over</p>	<p>Contours have been added to the figures in the Layover Facility Site Selection Report (Appendix 3.2-E) for clarity. All layover yard alternatives considered would have similar infrastructure and would have negligible difference in cost. Capital cost estimates were not used in the layover facility alternatives analysis.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		another. Such an analysis should address capital, operating, and development costs as part of the site evaluation/comparison process.	
L-047.129	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The Layover Yard Alternatives analysis study included in Appendix 3.2-E states that Site #5 (ISP) for the Fall River lateral should pass the preliminary screening and be included among the three Fall River based alternatives meriting further study. At the same time the report states that this site requires major grading work and has a long access road. The very same report states that site 4A (Somerset Junction, Fall River) is being rejected because it requires major site grading and has a long access road. The DEIS/DEIR rejects or accepts sites for further study based on economic considerations relating to development costs. Since this is the case, the DEIS/DEIR should include an economic evaluation of all the significant economic factors driving site selection. This involves estimating costs in a consistent fashion. The current screening process does not appear to be based on economic and engineering estimates – it appears to be arbitrary. The site selection process demands a quantitative analysis based on engineering facts and cost estimating principles.</p>	<p>The elevation difference between Fall River Secondary tracks and Site 4A: Somerset Junction is approximately 60 feet. Site 5: ISP varies in elevation from 10 feet higher to 20 feet lower than the tracks. Site 4A would require a significantly larger amount of grading than Site 5.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.130	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>MEPA and NEPA are processes that are supposed to garner public input. WCE in a letter written to the USACE and MDOT has questioned whether or not adequate public input has been secured in the alternatives study of the layover yards. MDOT has directly responded to these concerns in a letter dated 3/25/2010 with a copy to the USACE. In this letter MDOT stated:</p> <p>“There is no requirement to notify abutters and the [MDOT] team does not do so directly until there is a preferred alternative, which is not yet the case for South Coast Rail.”</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR has now been issued and there is no preferred alternative for the overnight yards and not a single listed site has been identified as a candidate for the midday layover facilities. Before the comment period closes on the DEIS/DEIR, the abutters to each of the overnight rail yard locations should be sent a letter requesting their input. The comment period should be extended until such time as they have had an opportunity to comment.</p>	<p>Public input opportunities since publication of the DEIS/DEIR are described in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 9, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination. The public comment period on the DEIS/DEIR closed on May 27, 2011. Preferred locations for the overnight layover facilities have been identified in Fall River (Weaver's Cove East site) and New Bedford (Wamsutta site). A mid-day layover facility will be identified as part of the separate South Station Expansion project. A preferred location for the mid-day layover facility has not yet been identified. Abutters to the overnight layover facility sites were welcomed to comment on the DEIS/DEIR and may do so on this FEIS/FEIR; both documents are available publicly. Specific abutter notification letters will be sent to property owners when the property acquisition process is initiated.</p>
L-047.131	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Only one or two abutters to the WCE East layover facility site appear to be aware that our property is being considered for a layover yard – and then only because Weaver’s Cove has informed them. Most nearby landowners remain unaware that our site may host an overnight train yard. Public input is essential to a thorough rail yard siting process. The comment period should be held open until such time as abutters to our property are formally notified in writing and provided an opportunity to comment. WCE requests that property owners within 1,500 yards of the boundaries of the layover yard sites as well as those with direct visual views be sent a written notification clearly stating that our site is being considered for an overnight year.</p>	<p>See response to comment L-047.130.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.132	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should commission a study to determine what impact a rail layover yard will have on the value and insurance costs of neighboring properties.	The requested analysis is not required for an EIS. A summary discussion of property value impacts is provided in FEIS/FEIR Chapter 4.3, Socioeconomics. It is expected that property values near stations would increase while values along the rail line but distant from stations would decrease. Specific property value impacts near the layover facility sites were not calculated, nor were insurance cost impacts.
L-047.133	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>At the open house held in Fall River, the South Coast Rail development team verbally explained that potential sites for the yard in Fall River, near the train station, were eliminated from consideration at the request of the Mayor Correia. The DEIS/DEIR should identify the locations of the sites in Fall River that were “eliminated” from consideration at the Mayor’s request (or at the request of any other political figure). The DEIS/DEIR should include a map of the area near the Fall River Battleship Cove Station that identifies all of landholdings of the City of Fall River and landholdings of other Government agencies with parcel boundaries and ownership shown. The DEIS should document whether or not these sites were considered as part of a layover yard site selection process and if they were dismissed should provide supporting environmental and economic data to support their dismissal.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR should describe the justification for dropping sites off the list at the request of the Mayor. The DEIS/DIR should identify the regulatory authority under which the Mayor of Fall River has the right to remove from consideration overnight yard locations within the City of Fall River. The DEIS/DEIR should describe under what authority the Mayor can exercise veto power over the site selection process. The DEIS/DEIR should describe what other officials have made such requests, when they were made, and how they were handled.</p>	The layover facility site alternative selection process described in the DEIS/DEIR is summarized but not reiterated in the FEIS/FEIR; the selection of the two preferred alternative locations for the sites in Fall River and New Bedford is described in Chapter 3, Alternatives, Section 3.2.16, Layover Facilities. Property acquisition requirements for the two selected locations, Weaver's Cove East and Wamsutta, are described in Chapter 4.2, Land Use and Zoning. Chapter 4.3, Socioeconomics, lists each parcel by number and indicates ownership type (public or private), land use, tax loss, job loss, and acreage impacts.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.134	Weaver's Cove Energy	If owners of the overnight yard and midday layover facilities are not willing to sell their land, the DEIS/DEIR should explain how the project will gain title to the land. The specific steps involved should be described along with the scheduling of those steps.	MassDOT would negotiate with each property owner as required by the Uniform Act, and utilize eminent domain only if necessary.
L-047.135	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS should describe whether or not a reserve funding account will be set aside to guarantee that funding is available to dismantle the overnight yard and restore it to the before build condition should the yard cease to be used for public transportation purposes at some time in the future. The DEIS/DEIR should describe who will pay to restore the layover yard to its original condition. Will a bond be required to ensure restoration of the site at the end of its useful life?	A reserve funding account is not a mitigation measure required.
L-047.136	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should address the construction schedule and sequence of construction activities that will be undertaken during the construction of the overnight yard. Construction impacts can only be assessed if a construction plan is provided.	Information on construction of the alternatives is provided in Chapter 3. Construction impacts are assessed to the extent reasonable at the current level of design.
L-047.137	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should identify the storm water controls that will be required if the overnight yard is built on the WCE's East or West sites. How will the project ensure that these controls satisfy the requirements of the Wild and Scenic River Act?	The Weaver's Cove West site has been dismissed from further consideration. A description of stormwater controls proposed for the layover facility that would be constructed at the Weaver's Cove East site is provided in Chapter 4.17, Water Resources. The stormwater controls would be designed in compliance with Massachusetts' Stormwater Standards and numerous other regulatory programs, including the requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as described in Section 4.17.1.2, Regulatory Context and Significance.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.138	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should explain how the construction activities and permanent structures associated with the in-water aspects of the project will impact the free flowing characteristics of the Taunton River as defined under the Wild and Scenic River act. If the flow of the river will be changed, how will compliance with the act be ensured?	An evaluation of the South Coast Rail project's compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is provided in Chapter 4.18, Coastal Zone and Chapter 91, and in Chapter 4.5, Visual and Aesthetic Resources. The bridges over the Taunton River that would be replaced would likely, based on preliminary design, include fewer pilings than the current bridges, improving boating access to this reach of the river. MassDOT has coordinated with the National Park Service in regard to the potential impacts to this Wild and Scenic River in order to ensure compliance with the Act.
L-047.139	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should describe what the cumulative construction impacts will be if the South Coast Rail project and WCE LNG project are both built at the same time.	It is our understanding that the WCE LNG project is no longer under consideration. Should such project be proposed, then its environmental review should consider its cumulative effects, if any, in conjunction with South Coast Rail construction.
L-047.14	Weaver's Cove Energy	The project needs to show compliance with Federal Conformity standards. This generally requires an estimate of operational and construction air impacts over the life of the project. The DEIS/DEIR should include these estimates as well as the details of how they have been determined.	Air quality is discussed in Chapter 4.9.
L-047.140	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should describe the deep foundations that must be installed during the construction of the overnight yard. If these foundations might impact historical contamination at proposed overnight yard locations, the methods of dealing with this contamination should be described. A similar analysis should be completed for all passenger station locations.	To the extent warranted based on future, more detailed design, these studies will be conducted prior to construction.
L-047.141	Weaver's Cove Energy	A number of trucks will deliver and remove materials from the Project area during construction and during operation. The DEIS/DEIR should describe the number and timing of these trucking operations. Air quality, noise, and traffic impacts from these trucking operations should be addressed in the DEIS/DEIR.	Construction traffic to and from the project area will be temporary and locational and for a limited period of time due to the linear nature of the project. Significant construction impacts are not anticipated.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.142	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should explain how contaminated soils will be handled if encountered during the construction of the overnight yard. If soils will be removed offsite, the DEIS/DEIR should identify disposed sites. The DEIS/DEIR should describe whether or not contaminated soils will remain on the site or will they be removed from the site? If they remain on the site, the methods used to handling the soils should be described. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how contaminated soil handing procedures will comply with regulatory requirements and any restriction imposed as a result of deed restrictions. The methods used for monitoring. And, if required, how will the movements of these soils be monitored to ensure the contamination does not spread?	Discussion of contaminated soil is described in Chapter 4.12 - Hazardous Materials.
L-047.143	Weaver's Cove Energy	Rail facilities are known for their contribution of petroleum products, fuel, and waste oil to soil and groundwater. The DEIS/DEIR should explain how storm water from the rail yards be handled and how the interests of adjacent landowners will be protected as oil can migrate from one property to another.	Discussion of contaminated soil is described in Chapter 4.12, Hazardous Materials.
L-047.144	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should identify what material will be used for the ties associated with track construction. Creosote has been identified as a potent environmental pollutant. If pressure treated wood will be used, how will the impact of the treatment chemicals on the ground water be modeled and monitored?	Discussion of contaminated soil is described in Chapter 4.12 , Hazardous Materials.
L-047.145	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should identify provisions that will be made to clean up spills of raw sewage as it is transferred from the passenger cars or leaks at a station or along the commuter rail route. The responsibility of South Coast Rail to provide spill response equipment should be discussed in the DEIS/DEIR.	Proper controls will be implemented to avoid spillage of waste materials. Spill response will be implemented in accordance with MassDOT operational procedures. Only trash removal and light cleaning will be performed at the overnight layover facilities. Raw sewage will be removed at the midday layover and maintenance facility in Boston.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.146	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIR/DEIS should address studies that have been performed to investigate the effects of electromagnetic fields on the neighboring homes, schools and businesses or the Mill River high pressure natural gas pipelines which will run along the track and will include cathodic protection systems.	Electromagnetic fields associated with electrified rail operations will stay within defined limits and standards in effect for U.S. rail facilities.
L-047.147	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should address odor issues. Will any odors emanate from the layover facility? What about the sewage on the trains? Will this sewage be stored at the site and trucked offsite? Where will the sewage be processed? How will odors be controlled?	Layover facility operations are not expected to generate odor emissions. Sewage generated will be treated in accordance with municipal requirements. See response to comment L-047.145
L-047.148	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should clarify if the project proponent proposes to indemnify the property owners and other potentially responsible parties from any and all environmental impacts, direct and indirect, that the project could have on the existing and proposed environmental conditions at lands taken to develop the Project.	Indemnification may be negotiated by MassDOT at the time of purchase.
L-047.149	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should address soil conditions along Project lands. The transmission of vibrations through soils is highly dependent on the nature of the soils and rock between the rail yard and sensitive receptors. The nature of the soils and depth to bedrock should be investigated.	An analysis of potential vibration impacts is provided in Chapter 4.7, Vibration. The analysis was consistent with Federal Transit Administration guidance on the level of analysis appropriate for the environmental review process. Detailed soil testing was not required.
L-047.150	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should discuss wetland mitigation plans. If mitigation is required, the commitment of the project to monitoring programs should be detailed as well as the project's plans to ensure the long term survival of replicated areas is assured over time. The commitment of the project to replace mitigation areas that do not survive over the long term should be discussed. The commitment of the project to take corrective actions should mitigation fail should be discussed.	Wetland mitigation is described in Chapter 4.16-Wetlands, Chapter 6 - Mitigation of the FEIS/FEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.151	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Given that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has determined that passenger rail systems are vulnerable to terrorist attacks and in light of the terrorist attacks on mass transit systems (i.e. Madrid, London, Mumbai), the DEIS/DEIR should outline precautions that will be taken to protect the layover yard and the rail line from terrorist attacks. The agencies that will be involved in developing the appropriate security plans should be listed and their role described. Providing security for the rail facilities will be costly. How will these additional funds be secured? Will local municipalities be required to fund the necessary security measures? The funding of security resources that are provided by the local community should be discussed. Payments for equipment, training, overtime and other expenses should be enumerated in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	Safety and security will be addressed in accordance with applicable standards and criteria.
L-047.152	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Train facilities have a documented history of terrorist attacks. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the type of response plans that will be required to manage such an emergency. Evacuation plans should be documented. The local agencies and resource that will be available to respond to the plan should be described.</p>	Safety and security will be addressed in accordance with applicable standards and criteria.
L-047.153	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>The DEIS/DEIR should discuss how the Project will demonstrate compliance with noise standards through the execution of testing program after the facility is in operation. The criteria that must be met should be described. If the noise standards are not met, the corrective actions that will be taken to bring the project into compliance should be described in the DEIS/DEIR.</p>	Potential noise impacts are discussed in Chapter 4.6 of the FEIS/FEIR



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.154	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should discuss the electrical requirements to support the operation of the overnight yard (as well as other Project Elements). The environmental impacts associated with installing this electrical capacity should be detailed. The noise of the transformers should be documented and the oil used in the transformers described. The type of spill containment around the transformers should also be described. If the transformers have cooling fans installed, the noise level of the fans and impacts on nearby receptors should be described. The type of fire suppression systems that will be put in place should also be documented.	Hazardous materials are discussed in Chapter 4.12, noise impacts are analyzed in Chapter 4.6. Chapter 3 describes the electrical facilities (including but not limited to substations and catenary) associated with the electric rail alternatives. These as well as other components of the rail alternatives are analyzed throughout the FEIS/FEIR for all applicable resource categories.
L-047.155	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should identify and describe the potentially hazardous and flammable materials that will be stored and used at a typical rail yard. The location where the diesel fueled trains will be refueled should be discussed and the amount of diesel fuel stored on the site should be discussed. The trucking activities (or will they be filled by pipeline) associated with the refilling of these tanks should be described. Measures that will be taken in the event hazardous or flammable materials are spilled should be discussed.	Hazardous materials are discussed in Chapter 4.12. Train operations and fueling facilities will be implemented in accordance with applicable safety and security standards. No hazardous or flammable materials will be stored at the overnight layover facilities. All refueling will occur at the midday layover and maintenance facility in Boston.
L-047.156	Weaver's Cove Energy	The DEIS/DEIR should describe how spilled petroleum products will be cleaned up and how the response will be coordinated with prior landowners if the site is already contaminated with similar materials.	Hazardous materials are discussed in Chapter 4.12. Train operations and fueling facilities will be implemented in accordance with applicable safety and security standards. Response measures for recovering spilled petroleum products, and coordinating with prior property owners, would be conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (310 CMR 40.0000).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.157	Weaver's Cove Energy	The use of diesel fueled trains is considered in the DEIS/DEIR. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss where the fueling of the trains will take place. The DEIS/DEIR should describe how much fuel will stored at the refueling station. The diesel fuel storage tanks and spill control equipment should be described (footprint, diameter, height). How will stormwater drainage systems be separated form oil spill containment sumps? Safety equipment associated with the diesel refueling station should be described in the DEIS/DEIR. The type of firefighting capacity needed should be described in the DEIS/DEIR?	Hazardous materials are discussed in Chapter 4.12. Train operations and fueling facilities will be implemented in accordance with applicable safety and security standards. A description of stormwater controls proposed for the layover facilities that would be separated from the oil containment controls is provided in Chapter 4.17, Water Resources. The stormwater controls would be designed in compliance with Massachusetts' Stormwater Standards.
L-047.158	Weaver's Cove Energy	Diesel fuel will need to be transported from a source of supply to the train fueling facilities discussed in the comments above. How will the diesel fuel be delivered to the train fueling facility? The DEIS/DEIR should describe approximately how many trucks will be required and what route will they travel. The time of day that deliveries of oil will be accepted should be described as well as the air, noise, and traffic impact of these facilities.	Hazardous materials are discussed in Chapter 4.12. Train operations and fueling facilities will be implemented in accordance with applicable safety and security standards. See response to comment L-047.155
L-047.159	Weaver's Cove Energy	A significant amount of electricity is required to run electrified trains. The DEIS/DEIR should discuss where this power will come from and how it will be delivered to the overhead wires. Transformer yards can be unsightly and can consume significant amount of real estate. The DEIS/DEIR should describe where the transformer facilities will be located and a drawing should be prepared to show where all the electric delivery facilities will be located.	Electricity will be provided via the existing power grid. Electrical substations will be constructed along the alignment to provide adequate power to the rail operations. This is described in Chapter 3 - Alternatives. The substations have been included in the environmental analyses.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-047.160	Weaver's Cove Energy	<p>Upon receiving a hard copy of the DEIS, WCE also received a brochure titled, "South Coast Rail: A Reader's Guide to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report". The brochure, published by Mass DOT and dated March 2011, is clearly intended to provide summary data to the public. This continues a long trend of such public relations documents. The brochure fails to reference any of the proposed layover facility locations yet includes a map that clearly shows the rail stations and track routes. All future documents (including brochures and permit applications) should clearly identify layover facility locations in detail equivalent to that provided for station and track locations.</p>	Thank you for your comment

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## **Individuals**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-046.01	Elizabeth Acheson	<p>I'm in my 80's, so I don't drive into town on my own very often, - probably not again. The size of my age group is increasing. Therefore, the number of people from the Southeast who depend on Boston for their entertainment, financial guidance, and medical care is diminishing. We can't get there!</p> <p>It's sad for us who enjoyed being in Boston and can no longer travel there easily. We need trains to get us into town and back.</p> <p>I wish you success in your efforts to "re-train" us (many of us remember riding the train into town in pre-WWII days).</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
E-024.01	Melinda Ailes	<p>I am writing to express my strong support for bringing commuter rail to Southeastern MA through the Stoughton "electric" alternative. The Stoughton alternative should be selected because it was identified by the Army Corp. of Engineers as having the least environmentally damaging impact.</p> <p>As both a citizen of Southeastern Massachusetts and an employee of the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Southeast Regional Office, I see the profound impact that commuter rail will make on our region's future economic success. At the same time, I recognize that our region's lack of rail is a significant determinant in restricting our ability to attract quality businesses and employees. We have studied the positive effects of commuter rail for too many years and it is now time to act.</p>	<p>The DEIS/R did not name the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA). The Corps identified the environmental consequences of the alternatives studied in the DEIS/R to multiple resources but did not identify the LEDPA prior to completion of the FEIS/R.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-024.02	Melinda Ailes	As you are well aware, this region of the state has one of the state's highest unemployment rates- as well as being one of few areas of growing population. Bringing commuter rail to Fall River and New Bedford would do at least three positive things. It will allow workers a wider range of employment options by expanding their geographic reach. Second, it will attract business development since employers will have access to a broader pool of employees in a region with lower operating costs and high quality of life attributes. Third it will allow more regional mobility. The economic ripple effect from lower unemployment and new business investment will in turn bolster housing growth and revitalization of these inner cities and neighborhoods.	Thank you for your comment.
L-058.01	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	<p>I oppose the Stoughton-Easton -Fall River -New Bedford rail alternative for the following reasons:</p> <p>1. THE RAIL PROJECT IS A BOONDOGGLE. The cost is astronomical in contrast to the small group of riders it would serve. Overall cost is estimated at \$2 billion today which will rise to \$4 billion with the usual cost over-runs at the time of construction. The ridership envisioned is but a vision and a hope. When a bus route was proposed in the recent past, the proponents could not justify it:</p> <p>insufficient number of riders making the trek into Boston.</p> <p>What will change? Will the educated pool of riders for those Boston jobs change? Will riders who are qualified for Boston jobs want to endure a 3-hour round trip every day and deprive their families of their presence? The obvious answer is "NO" to both questions. If the goal is to raise the socio-economic level of Fall River and New Bedford residents, put the money into economic development in those communities so that they can prosper and their citizenry can find employment close to home.</p>	The ridership modeling was conducted by CTPS, the regional agency with expertise in these issues and reviewed by MassDOT and USACE.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-058.02	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	<p>THE RAIL PROJECT IS HAZARDOUS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TO THE HEALTH, WELFARE, AND WELLBEING OF EASTON RESIDENTS.</p> <p>The train cutting through the environmentally sensitive Hockomock Swamp will wreak havoc and destruction on habitat, wildlife, and the filtering of toxins. The train will adversely impact Town of Easton municipal wells and threaten our drinking water. The train's barreling through North Easton's Historic District will endanger the stability and edifices of many unique and one-of-a-kind internationally regarded Henry Hobson Richardson buildings. It will interrupt the many residents' (some of whom are a mere 25 feet from the tracks) sleep at 5:30 a.m. with the blaring whistle of the first commuter train. The 37 daily trips will cause enormous and detrimental harm to the health and well-being of Easton residents. There are many seniors (including Housing for the Elderly) along the route who are already battling with insomnia and don't need this additional insult to their environment or to their health.</p>	<p>The environmental issues cited in the comment were addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>
L-058.03	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	<p>THE RAIL PROJECT CUTS THROUGH THE VERY HEART AND CENTER OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES: POLICE, FIRE, AND AMBULANCE.</p>	<p>MassDOT has committed to work with local officials to prioritize safety. In addition, testimonials from emergency responders along the Greenbush Line stated that introducing commuter rail operations in their communities has not affected their ability to respond promptly to their communities needs and a comprehensive public safety awareness program would be developed for the South Coast Rail communities, as was done for the Greenbush Line.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-058.04	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	<p>I support the bus alternate for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The buses can be run on natural gas and other gasoline alternatives and will be more environmentally friendly than the train.</li> <li>2. The bus trip is faster and can be easily accessed on the street, thus avoiding the cost of constructing bus stations.</li> <li>3. No costly infrastructure except the designated lane is needed e.g. tracks, bus stations, etc.</li> <li>4. The bus route can shift in the future with the shift in population whereas the train infrastructure will be a permanent environmental blight. The railbed would be better served by converting it into bike and walking paths as many communities have done e.g. Orange County, New York.</li> </ol> <p>For all the foregoing I respectfully request that the South Coast Rail Project be wisely scuttled in favor of the bus alternative or better yet no alternative until such time as the numbers warrant such a costly expenditure of taxpayer's monies.</p>	The Rapid Bus Alternative has been eliminated, see Chapter 3 for the rationale.
E-038.01	Ken Amaral	I think your decision to use the land at the Checkbook and Pine Swamps in Easton and Raynham to support a railway between Boston, Freetown and Fall River is great. I have recently returned from Alaska where I rode the train to Denali and saw little if and adverse effects on wildlife.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-059.01	Barbara Anzivino	<p>The MassDOT is asking for a waiver of the wetlands protection act by claiming it is for the common good.</p> <p>They are arguing the economic development of the south coast region can only be gained by transit-oriented development. This reasoning is flawed and therefore the waivers should not be given for the following reasons.</p> <p>1. Commuter rail has not delivered on this promise not only on the lines already constructed in Massachusetts but in other parts of the country.</p> <p>a) Denver's Regional Transportation District has made a mess of the multibillion-dollar, tax-funded project, making promises it couldn't keep and offering estimates that have been dramatically flawed.</p> <p>b) Stoughton already has a commuter rail station. The economic development in this area has not occurred. (See photo's)</p> <p>c) North Easton station site has considerable development without the need for a train station. (See attached photo's)</p> <p>d) Easton center train station site has the shovel shop, which already has a planned housing and retail development planned again with out the need for the train coming through. (See photo's and attached pdf of the final shovel shop)</p>	<p>The Wetlands Protection Act is a state law administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and does not involve USACE.</p> <p>With respect to Transit Oriented Development, it is recognized that transit access is only one of many factors that influence land development decisions (other factors including economic conditions, local land use regulations, infrastructure, environmental constraints etc.). Nevertheless, the improved accessibility provided by the project is expected to encourage a greater proportion of future growth to occur in the vicinity of station areas on a regional basis and MassDOT will implement a monitoring and reporting program that will include transit oriented development metrics (see Chapter 5). Development in specific areas/parcels near stations is not guaranteed, but the overall effect of rail transit on land use surrounding stations has been well studied (see Section 4.3.3.1 for summary of literature related to impacts on property values, which is a proxy measure for development potential).</p>
L-059.02	Barbara Anzivino	<p>2. The economic information submitted to the army corps section 4 fails to emphasize the failure of development is mostly due to the lack of water and sewer.</p> <p>a. Stoughton achieved rapid growth only after joining the MWRA.</p> <p>b. The town of Easton will not achieve the economic growth argued in the document until water and sewage needs are met. Projects can only be built within the current water and sewage limits. Notice from town web page (Water Restrictions: The Water Department would like to remind residents that currently Phase II is in effect. Phase II restricts water on an even/odd address basis.)</p>	<p>The commenter is correct that utilities such as water and sewer can limit development in certain areas and utilities were likely among the considerations of the regional planning organizations that developed the future demographic forecasts used in the environmental review process. However, it is assumed necessary expansions to meet future demand would occur over time and that utility limitations would not be a driving factor in the 2035 growth projections presented in Chapter 5 of the FEIS/FEIR. If market conditions support development, it is likely that utilities will be extended to meet the development.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-059.03	Barbara Anzivino	<p>3. The amount of congestion it can relieve, at the rosiest estimate, would be only marginal.</p> <p>a. The corps should fully re-examine the realities of the metro area's vast geography, its real-world travel patterns, our addiction to the automobile and the failure of fixed rail lines to significantly reduce congestion on our roadways.</p> <p>b. The Federal rail highway advises against at grade crossings yet the south coast rail includes many of these Given the at-grade crossings proposed by the full build-out of south Coast rail (and not including the existing lines), and the frequent train schedules, an opportunity exists for massive traffic snarls.</p> <p>c. Minneapolis, a federal transit review found that poorly planned traffic-signal systems subjected drivers to long and unnecessary waits. Some drivers reported commute times that doubled. The federal study found that the problem could never be corrected, meaning the rail line's congestion-relieving benefits were negated by the problems the grade crossings caused for drivers.</p> <p>The corps should demand that Massachusetts prove that the at-grade crossings won't be an issue. At a meeting for station planning for the North Easton station Comments were recorded about current traffic issues in this area. The plan is for a 500-car parking lot. To illustrate the lack of understanding of the situation the South Coast rail will have two roads existing the parking lot but both feeding unto the same road (rte. 138) Currently a Supermarket and office building already exit on to this road creating 20 minute back ups during the evening rush hour. There will be only 3 rush hour trains and at full capacity of the parking lot and assuming some drop off and pick ups, one can conservatively estimate the increase number of vehicles to be 100 per train. If 10 cars can go through the traffic light per cycle then you are increasing the cycles by 10. This traffic will further jam 138 increasing tie</p>	<p>While there would be benefits in terms of reduced auto travel, the project is not expected to significantly reduce roadway congestion. See Section 4.1.4.2, subsection regional freeway benefits.</p> <p>There is no federal advisory against at-grade crossings. The project would meet safety standards for the design of at-grade crossings consistent with Federal Railroad Administration requirements. The potential traffic impacts of at-grade crossings were considered in detail (see Chapter 4.1-Transportation) and mitigation measures developed to address any adverse impacts.</p> <p>USACE is unable to determine from the comment what study in Minneapolis is being cited or whether it is relevant to the South Coast Rail project.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>ups at lights and intersections further along this route negating much of the CO2 reductions gains.</p> <p>e. The above argument can be repeated at each and every stop.</p> <p>f. Frequent trips over long distances tend to dramatically dilute ridership per mile. Less riders per mile means more carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere, as diesel is a fossil fuel, and the electrical grid is mostly powered by fossil fuels.</p> <p>g. Most passenger cars already emit less CO2 per passenger mile than an equivalent use of commuter rail. Because the cars are becoming more fuel-efficient so quickly, the divide will only continue to grow.</p>	
L-059.04	Barbara Anzivino	4. The fanciful assertions about job creation are up for debate.	While it is acknowledged that future job growth cannot be predicted with certainty, a rational process was used to estimate these effects for the EIS/EIR that included robust modeling tools and input from the regional planning organizations (See Chapter 5- Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-059.05	Barbara Anzivino	<p>5. Noise pollution</p> <p>a. Currently the trains pulling into Stoughton Station blow their whistles. The town hall is located near this station. The noise from the train whistles causes meeting in the great Hall to be stopped because people cannot hear. This will increase as the number of trains increase. It is interesting to note the Stoughton station area is not mentioned in the table 4.6-5.</p> <p>b. There is a theater within 1000 feet of the tracks in Stoughton Center. Currently there is an effort to restore the theater to it's original state. No mention of the theater appears in the report, yet it will be directly impacted by the noise trains especially the whistles.</p> <p>C. The number of crossing in the town Stoughton vs. the distance and the Swift act will cause the trains' whistles to be blown almost continuous from the time the train hits the border until it leaves. I live two miles from the train station and am disturbed by the train whistles now. It will only get worse.</p> <p>D. The towns with the least to gain will be impacted the most. Please note that the diesel Alternative will have less severe impacts as seen in Table 4.6-21 and Table 4.6-20.</p> <p>E The diesel alternative will also have less impacts in the constructions period as shown in Table 4.6-30.</p> <p>F. It is interesting the state is willing to spend 1.4 Billion dollars on a train but when it comes to helping people who are directly impacted and getting no benefit they are limiting what they will spend. It should also be noted that the \$5000 seems arbitrary and not based on current construction cost.</p>	<p>Table 4.6-5 in the DEIS/DEIR did include Stoughton Station (on page 4.16-15). The table pertains to existing/ No-Build condition noise levels, not the projected future noise level with the project.</p> <p>The Stoughton Town Hall was not considered a noise sensitive receptor under the noise impact analysis methodology that was consistent with the requirements of the federal agency with expertise in this issue- the Federal Transit Administration. The noise analysis was focused on receptors such as residences, schools, places of worship, parks etc.</p> <p>The State Theater in Stoughton was not analyzed for noise impacts because it is not currently open and it is unknown if/when it will reopen again. Given the length of the corridors under study, the analyses were reasonably focused on current land uses could not take into account the speculative future use of specific properties.</p> <p>The updated noise analyses for the FEIS/FEIR no longer show a substantial benefit of the diesel alternatives with respect to noise impacts (see Table 4.6-21).</p> <p>The noise mitigation policy is proposed by MBTA and is not a policy of USACE. MBTA's cost effectiveness criterion is within the range of mitigation cost effectiveness criteria used by transit agencies nationally. The cost-effectiveness limit for building noise mitigation will be \$5,000 per dwelling unit per decibel of noise impact projected above the Severe Noise Impact Level (not to exceed \$30,000 total). Thus, for example, if a dwelling unit is expected to have noise impacts 3 decibels (using the Ldn metric) above the Severe Noise Impact Level, the building noise mitigation measures will be funded not to exceed \$15,000 in cost for that dwelling unit.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-059.06	Barbara Anzivino	6. Then you can throw in the certainties of a government-sponsored project costing more than estimated, taking longer to build and underperforming the revenue projections. The Massachusetts commuter rail rose 43% from fiscal 2001 to 2008, a \$74.5 million increase as the railroad's operator was asked to open a new line and expand service on 3 others. The Massachusetts transit system is unable to keep pace with cost inflation and falling dangerously behind on repairs needed to keep passengers safe. The cost of the project is not in the public good and the cost to maintain it is also not in the common good.	The capital and operating costs of the alternatives were considered by USACE. USACE is not a proponent of any permitting project and reviews such projects according to the specific criteria for permit issuance established in regulations and NEPA's mandate to consider alternatives, environmental impacts and mitigation for major federal actions.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-059.07	Barbara Anzivino	<p>Arguing the wetlands protection act should be waived because the project is for the common good is not valid. One group of People cannot be valued over another group of people. Massachusetts often seems more preoccupied With politics- most obviously, placating mayors from the cities of New Bedford a Fall River, and Taunton who want to ensure their rail line is built. The wetlands protection act serves all the People. Waivers should not be given lightly and should not be given simply for political reason. The argument for the common good should include all the people not just the "group of the hour". Further more the greatest harm to the environment is in the towns that have the least to gain.</p> <p>Yes, rail lines are sleek and attractive. But besides being pricey to install, they are pricey to maintain, and other alternatives exist that would clear clogged roadways (and the air) at least as effectively, if not more so.</p> <p>Please turn down the request to waive the Wetland protection act and the South Coast Rail Project. It is not for common good since the supposed economic growth is not supported by facts, nor is the improvement to the environment but instead this project will destroy wetlands solely for political aims as confirmed at public hearings by speeches by politicians from towns who want the rails and from politicians who want the train as long as it isn't going through their towns.</p>	The Wetlands Protection Act is a state law administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and does not involve USACE.
L-059.08	Barbara Anzivino	I also was disappointed in the fact that only 2 public hearings were held on a billion dollar project yet none of the public hearings were in the towns the had the most to lose, Easton, Raynham, and Stoughton.	Sufficient opportunities for public input into the environmental review process were provided, a hearing in each town along the corridor was not required.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-059.09	Barbara Anzivino	Finally all of these impacts will be exacerbated if this track also includes freight.	Freight services is anticipated to continue on the track segments where freight is currently provided (on the Stoughton Line north of Stoughton Station, on the Attleboro Secondary, on the Stoughton Line in Taunton between Longmeadow Road and Weir Junction, and on the New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary south of Weir Junction). No future freight service is currently planned or anticipated on the currently out-of-service Whittenton Branch or Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road.
L-059.10	Barbara Anzivino	Office park already constructed near North Easton Station picture 1  It appears a future train will not enhance development in this area by much. The current wait to exit this parking lot onto route 138 in the evening rush hour is sometimes as long as 20 minutes. The second office building is built but not occupied. The third is under construction. What will a 500 car parking lot do the traffic in this area?	Traffic impacts in Easton are discussed in Section 4.1.4.2.
E-029.01	Glenn Bachman	Can you please tell me the close of comment period date for the south coast rail project.	The DEIS/DEIR comment period ended May 27, 2011. An additional comment period for the FEIS is not part of the NEPA process; however it is the Corps understanding that an additional comment period will be provided by the Commonwealth on the FEIR, pursuant to MEPA.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
F-001.01	Peter Barney	<p>I am writing this letter in support of bringing passenger rail service in addition to upgraded freight service to New Bedford and Fall River.</p> <p>When the railroads were first built New Bedford had one of the earliest connecting lines to Boston which followed the economic expansion of the South Coast region Today, this area of the state has been disenfranchised from the possibilities of job creation and rapid transportation which was available as late as the mid-1950's from New Bedford to Boston.</p> <p>New Bedford's expanding economy, especially with the coming wind turbine project, requires the upgrade of the existing track for faster freight service, but we also need to be connected for passenger service both to and from Boston so that our citizens can avoid the long traffic delays on Route 24 to get to job opportunities in Boston.</p> <p>The Stoughton route offers the most direct and fastest connection to Boston from Fall River and New Bedford.</p> <p>Since a total rebuild of the raised right-of-way in New Bedford with its old railroad bridges is under way, a major step has been taken to prepare for expanded freight service, and with the possibilities of coming passenger trains.</p> <p>This project should be speeded up as fast as possible, so the cities of New Bedford and Fall River can fully join in the economic expansion of the eastern Massachusetts metropolitan area.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-057.01	Christopher Barros	I fully support the article that was run in our local newspaper (the Standard Times) today, May 27th, 2011 on page A4. It was written by Dr. T. K. Roy, Professor Emeritus @ UMASS Dartmouth. Everything he wrote about our future here in the Southcoast for rail transportation. Most notable in Professor Roy's article was the fact that the rail completion..."will save millions of gallons of gasoline yearly used CURRENTLY in traffic back and forth to Boston, REDUCING pollution and dependence and foreign oil." I have the development site as well monitor the ongoing on the projects website. As an environmentalist, I know our CHILDREN deserve a clean, bright and prosperous future. We owe to them. Future generations of this whole region, sir, will be looking to you. Thank you for your time and your consideration pertaining this matter.	Thank you for comment. Air quality effects were evaluated in Chapter 4.9.
E-070.01	Christopher Barros	Sir, our local newspaper ran an article today that I hope you have taken into strong consideration for the future welfare of we South Coast residents, Our commuter rail project will ..."save millions of gallons of gasoline yearly used currently in traffic back and forth to Boston, REDUCING pollution and dependence on foreign oil." This is one quotation from the writer of today's article, Professor Emeritus Dr. T.K. Roy of UMASS Dartmouth. Actually, everything that was written in this article. ..."Comment today on South Coast Rail Project", I am in FULL agreement. It is logical and pertinent the future generations of this whole region. Thank you for your time ... and your consideration to this matter.	Thank you for comment. Air quality effects were evaluated in Chapter 4.9.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-039.01	Sue Bass	<p>I hadn't gotten very far in reading the Wetlands section of the South Coast Rail EIR/EIS (which is the section where I started) before I started finding gaps in the text.</p> <p>For example, on the first page, in section 4.16.1.1 RESOURCE DEFINITION, at least part of one sentence is missing. The text reads, "Under Massac [a line and a half of blank space] marshes, swamps, bogs, areas where groundwater, flowing or standing surface water or ice provide"</p> <p>The very next section, REGULATORY CONTEXT, has a similar gap: "Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires a Department of the Army permit for the discharge of [long blank followed by the superscript 2] including adjacent wetlands."</p> <p>I don't know how this happened or how common it is in the text, but it is serious. While I can mentally fill in references to such things as the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, I have no way of knowing what else was omitted. After fixing all the errors, I suggest you re-notice this and extend the comment period.</p>	<p>The commenter was contacted by USACE via email on May 17, 2011 and provided a PDF copy of the chapter. The commenter subsequently responded to USACE that the missing words were a temporary computer problem and the text was fully legible after re-downloading the chapters.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-060.01	Sue Bass	<p>Although I'm a supporter of rail transportation, I must oppose South Coast Rail, at least using the route the proponents have selected. When Governor Patrick and others made a campaign promise to push it through, they were probably ignorant of the enormous cost per rider and the enormous environmental price it would impose. This project does not make sense on either ground.</p> <p>Purely on environmental grounds, to slice through the state's largest freshwater wetland, the Hockomock Swamp, is absurd. Though a track did once run through the swamp, the rails have long since been removed; the scar they left is nearly erased. Constructing a new track would mean bulldozing many thousands of trees and wetlands. At least 12 acres of wetlands would be directly altered by this project, and more would be affected. Sixty-six streams would be crossed, on average about twice each. This is a lot of environmental "alteration."</p> <p>In The Song of the Dodo, David Quammen describes cutting a fine Persian carpet into "Thirty-Six Persian Throw Rugs." Each one is worth much less than 1/36th of the original carpet. Similarly, chopping up the Hockomock into smaller pieces will devastate the entire swamp. Do not do this.</p>	<p>The environmental issues raised in the comment were considered in detail in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-028.01	Richard Beal	<p>Subject: Stoughton Alternative Concern: Depot St. and Purchase St. Grade Crossings in the "South" Easton Section of Town</p> <p>Because of the short distance between the two grade crossings (1/4 mile) both the north and south bound trains will be required to sound their horn for 1/2 mile in both directions which means that residents of this area will receive twice as long horn blasts as other grade crossings in town.</p> <p>Also the Short St. grade crossing is less than 1/2 mile north of Depot St. and Prospect St. Grade is about 3/4 mile south of Purchase St., which means for all intents and purposes with trains scheduled every 22 minutes between the hours of 7am and 10pm and going 70 mph, the horn will blow almost continuously thru the South Easton section of town. To me and my neighbors this is a quality of life issue and is "unacceptable."</p> <p>The solution is obvious. The horn should not be blown in this area of Town. The grade crossings should have double wide gates with lights and bells with fences so no vehicles or pedestrians can cross until the train has passed. "Common sense should apply."</p>	<p>The commenter suggests the implementation of quiet zones at specific at-grade crossings. MassDOT is not proposing quiet zones at this time, but further information on this potential mitigation measure is provided in Chapter 4.6. Quiet zones must be approved by the Federal Railroad Administration and the application must be submitted by the appropriate local government.</p>
L-019.01	John Bullard	<p>As a long time advocate for the need to expand commuter rail to New Bedford and the South Coast, going back to my time as Mayor of the City of New Bedford, I would like to commend the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a thorough and objective analysis of the South Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Draft Environmental Impact Report dated February, 2011.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-019.02	John Bullard	<p>I believe that the thorough analysis in the DEIS of both the transportation and environmental factors associated with the alternatives is unassailable and leads to some very obvious conclusions. The report clearly demonstrates that the Stoughton Route provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford as measured by travel time and ridership. The Corps' analysis of the operational obstacles associated with both the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternative make it clear that these alternatives are not feasible.</p> <p>The analysis of environmental factors including wetlands, air quality and water resources also supports the conclusion that the Stoughton route performed best on the measure of environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route follows railbeds that were in service as recently as 1958 is an obvious factor in minimizing any negative impacts. The DEIS conclusion that the wetlands impact will be limited seems accurate, but I would support mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.</p> <p>Considerable time and effort has been invested to address the smart growth benefits of this project and I want to re-emphasize the importance of this issue. Likewise, the significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled and subsequent greenhouse gas reductions resulting from this project have not been given much attention but need to be emphasized in any environmental analysis.</p> <p>I believe that based upon the information presented in the DEIS that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) should be determined to be the Stoughton Alternative, the Commonwealth's preferred alternative. I also support the electric alternative with its lower carbon footprint and faster travel time between South Coast and Boston.</p> <p>I urge the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the LEDPA as expeditiously as possible. The region has been working on</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The direct Stoughton Route between Raynham Junction (at Route 138 in Raynham) and Longmeadow Road, Taunton was last used in ca. 1916. The Whittenton Alternative is the route that remained in service until 1958.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		the restoration of commuter rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for the Corps to complete its review so that MassDOT can proceed with a financial plan and other aspects of this project.	
E-041. 01	Steve Caste	<p>I oppose the spending of public money on the extension of commuter rail to New Bedford, Fall River and Taunton.</p> <p>I called this project a 2 billion dollar boondoggle for may reasons that night. Just yesterday, May 18th 2011, The Boston Globe wrote about the state of the MBTA and pointed out that ridership of commuter rail from 2008 to 2010 was down 6.8%. Granted there could be various reasons for this but one may be one that I had pointed out at the Mansfield meeting, that being that more people are now and will in the future be working from home.</p>	Spending funds on other things (such as direct economic investment) is an alternative outside the scope of this EIS/EIR because it would not address the purpose and need for the project.
E-041. 02	Steve Caste	Something else that I said in Mansfield also has to be reiterated , that is that any Route 24 traffic initially removed by commuter rail will be quickly filled in by others who see the road as a little less traveled and then we will quickly be in the same initial situation again. Solving nothing but spending billions.	Shifts in the travel patterns of drivers (including shifts from one roadway to another in response to changes in congestion) are accounted for in the CTPS regional transportation model.
E-041. 03	Steve Caste	If any transportation project is to be done then it should be the least costly alternative which is improved bus service. The money spent on this project to date could have already paid for this and it is a shame that the MBTA continues to press on with this irresponsible costly project in hopes of enlarging their empire of commuter rail. Needless to say, commuter rail is never self supporting and drains the public resources. I would never believe the MBTA's estimate of future ridership. It is completely self-serving.	Bus alternatives were considered carefully and found to not be practicable, see Chapter 3. The ridership projections were conducted by the regional agency with expertise in these issues (CTPS) and reviewed by USACE.
E-041. 04	Steve Caste	The fairness doctrine for New Bedford and Fall River is childish. Just because others have commuter rail doesn't mean that everyone should. This project should be decided on it's merits and not that all cities within 60 miles of Boston should have commuter rail.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-041. 05	Steve Caste	As I said in Mansfield, everyone would be better served if just a fraction of the money to be spent on this project was used to encourage/promote industry and businesses to locate in Southeastern Massachusetts. Then no one would have to travel for an hour or two to get to work. This is the best environmental solution.	Spending funds on other things (such as direct economic investment) is an alternative outside the scope of this EIS/EIR because it would not address the purpose and need for the project.
E-041. 06	Steve Caste	It is inconceivable to me that going thru a precious environmentally sensitive area such as the Hockomock Swamp has the least environmental impact. It's not inconceivable to me to hear that the MBTA says that this is the one that would have the least environmental impact. The MBTA makes statements and just hopes that no one questions them. If that happens, then they "win". Please do your due diligence and check everything.	Information provided by MassDOT was independently reviewed by USACE.
L-018.01	David Chaffin	While MassDOT's proposed trestle across the Hockomock Swamp ACEC would serve to minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding wetlands, such construction might miss an opportunity to enhance the environmental value of the surrounding area. According to Section 4.1 6 of the report, the existing railroad embankment has significantly altered the hydrology of the surrounding wetland from that which existed prior to construction of the embankment, resulting in the fragmented habitat now evident in the different vegetative communities that have become established on each side of the embankment. These circumstances suggest that it may be possible to rebuild the railroad and enhance environmental conditions in the Hockomock Swamp by building a trestle that would restore the historic hydraulic regime. Consequently, the potential environmental benefits of restoring the historic hydraulic regime should be determined and if deemed significant and cost-effective captured by the project.	Restoring the historic hydraulic regime could impact the existing wetland vegetative communities in ways that would be difficult to predict and could have undesirable effects on the existing Atlantic white cedar community on the west side of the embankment. For this reason, removing the embankment to restore hydrology was not a mitigation option advanced for further analysis/design work. The objective was to preserve the existing wetland condition and minimize disturbance as much as possible.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-050.01	Jim Chisholm	<p>If we are supposed to be living in a democracy, where the majority rules Then all people of voting age should be allowed to vote on the South Coast Rail.</p> <p>People from the Northern part of the state, Eastern and Western part of the state will most likely never use the south Coast Rail and should not have to pay for it for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>It should be put on a ballot.</p> <p>Anyone who votes for it should be taxed for it for the rest of their lives. People who vote against it should not have to pay. TAX New Bedford and Fall River, if they want it let them pay for it.</p> <p>The Right definition is: If you don't want it you shouldn't have to pay for it, like it or not. The wrong is whether you don't like it or want it we will make you pay for it?</p> <p>How about if you're not going to use it at all!</p>	<p>The comment does not pertain to issues within the scope of the EIS/EIR. USACE considered the views of all the comments received during the environmental review process. However, the federal review of the project is based on USACE's permitting requirements (summarized in Section 2.3) and not a popular vote or polling of project support/opposition.</p>
E-026.01	Paul Cienniwa	<p>I am writing you to voice my strong support for South Coast Rail. I have been a Fall River homeowner since 2006.</p> <p>While I would typically use the train only once a week, I would look forward to the economic prospects that rail would bring to the region. One concern that I have not seen in the media is that of social justice. Why is it that so many other metropolitan areas within an hour of Boston (if not all) have rail while the South Coast doesn't? Even Providence has rail to Boston. This, for me, is an equity issue. A Fall River resident pays \$38 for a round-trip ticket on the Peter Pan Bus line. Introducing South Coast Rail will help keep the "M" in the MBTA.</p> <p>There are many, many more reasons why South Coast Rail is good and necessary for the region. Please help to make this happen!</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-047.01	Steven Davis	<p>I oppose construction of the proposed Stoughton Alternative. I am very concerned about the following issues:</p> <p>1. There will be two grade crossings for me to cross should I choose to board the train at Roche Bros. Plaza. These crossings will not only create traffic for me and other residents but the entire town, which already has traffic problems due to rapid growth, will be subjected to continual traffic jams. The crossing of Rte. 106 is ill conceived as traffic to and from Five Corners already backs up significantly in both directions.</p>	<p>Grade crossing delay impacts were considered in Chapter 4.1 and mitigation measures developed, as appropriate.</p>
E-047.02	Steven Davis	<p>2. One of those crossings is approximately 200 yards from my front door. These grade crossings will disturb my current peaceful and quiet surroundings. I value these surroundings highly. The resale value of my home, essentially my life's savings, will depreciate considerably. A neighbor who lives a bit closer to the crossing has already told me he will rent his house out to Stonehill College students if the train comes through.</p>	<p>Noise impacts, including train horn noise impacts at grade crossings, are addressed in Chapter 4.6.</p> <p>Indirect changes in property values near the project were also considered, see Section 4.3.3.1. Chen et al. (1997) found that the positive effect on real estate values near station sites (due to increased access to transit services) was partially offset by a negative effect along the rail lines (due to increased nuisance impacts, principally noise and vibration). Chen et al did not quantify either the positive or negative changes in real estate values, but concluded that the "positive effect dominates the negative effect, which implies a declining price gradient as one moves away from [light rail transit] stations for several hundred meters." Armstrong (1994) found that there could be as much as a 20 percent decrease in residential property value for residences within 400 feet of MBTA's Fitchburg line.</p>
E-047.03	Steven Davis	<p>3. The water table in our neighborhood is very high. Virtually every home has a sump pump and a new or aging septic system. It is unclear to me what the impact to the already flood prone Black Brook will be.</p>	<p>The culvert at milepost 11.59 was washed out several years ago and would be replaced by a new bridge over Black Brook, see Chapter 4.18. Crossings would be appropriately designed so as to not increase flooding problems.</p>
E-047.04	Steven Davis	<p>4. There are quite a few children in the neighborhood. I am concerned for their safety if the train comes through. There have been accidents elsewhere.</p>	<p>Grade crossings would be appropriately designed and a quantitative grade crossing incident analysis was conducted to address safety impacts (see Chapter 4.1).</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-047.05	Steven Davis	5. The area is abundant with wildlife, e.g., deer, rabbits, fox, coyotes and turkeys among others. The train will undoubtedly diminish the population of wildlife.	Wildlife impacts were considered, see Chapter 4.14. No impact to overall populations of the species listed were identified.
E-047.06	Steven Davis	6. I have ridden the Commuter Rail from Stoughton and more recently Brockton for eighteen years. I find either of these stations equally convenient to get to. However, I question the MBTA's ability to manage another fleet of trains given their apparent inability and unprofessionalism in managing the existing fleet.	The comment does not pertain to issues within the scope of the EIS/EIR.
E-047.07	Steven Davis	7. There are existing lines which extend much further south which could be used to transport residents of the South coast to Boston. There is also the option of express busing. I do not understand why we need to lay track all the way from Stoughton to Fall River and beyond. If you must lay track, the commuter rail already passes through Attleboro on it's way to Providence. New Bedford could be reached by extending the Middleboro-Lakeville line.	<p>Numerous alternative options for meeting the project purpose were considered, as discussed in Chapter 3. The Middleboro Alternatives were eliminated in the pre-DEIS/DEIR alternatives screening analysis documented in the Phase I Alternatives Analysis Report (Appendix 3.1-A).</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternatives were evaluated in the DEIS/DEIR, but have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1 of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>
E-047.08	Steven Davis	8. Finally, I am concerned about the economic feasibility of laying more track. It will be a very expensive undertaking requiring more borrowing and operation of another train line at a loss at the expense of the taxpayer.	Funding issues for the project are outside the scope of this EIS/EIR. Capital and operating costs were a consideration in the alternatives analysis in Chapter 3.
L-067.01	Marianne De Souza	As a public health professional , taxpayer, and a parent, I believe that linking the City of New Bedford to Greater Boston and other communities south of Boston via rail will benefit public health and economic development. I support the alternate route through Stoughton because it is more direct and will reduce commute time which will offer of social benefit by increasing time for family and recreation beyond the work day. People who use the rail will increase their physical activity helping to reduce the epidemic of obesity that currently exists by frequent walks to and from rail access points. Increased pedestrian activity also promotes safer neighborhoods.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-067.02	Marianne De Souza	A major benefit from the rail will be to reduce fuel exhaust from the many vehicles that traverse our roads and highways enroute to educational, medical, workplace, entertainment, and cultural mecca in Boston. These exhausts present an environmental health hazard and serve as a trigger exacerbating the risk and triggers for asthma in our general population. Air quality in Massachusetts will improve as a result of the South coast Rail. I support the electric rather than the diesel system because it will be faster and more environmentally friendly. It will also be amenable to future technology of solar or wind energy.	Thank you for your comment.
L-067.03	Marianne De Souza	Another tangible benefit from the Southcoast Rail coming to New Bedford will be to increase opportunities for employment for New Bedford residents and neighboring communities that cannot afford the costly commutes via motor vehicles which is a matter of Environmental Justice. This will also help to fuel the local economy and provide a source of hope and opportunity that will benefit families and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by helping to reduce unemployment in an area of the state that has been particularly hard hit for generations.	Thank you for your comment.
L-032.01	Peter Deschenes	I write you regarding my concerns about the South Coast Rail Stoughton Alternative, From a planning perspective I am not against the South Coast Rail Stoughton Alternative. Each alternative has its' pros and cons therefore whichever route the Army Corps chooses is likely the most feasible.	Thank you for your comment.
L-032.02	Peter Deschenes	My first concern is that the amount of time given to municipalities and residents to review the DEIS and make comments is woefully inadequate.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-032.03	Peter Deschenes	<p>In addition to the official mitigation requests of the Town of Easton and surrounding communities, I am particularly concerned with how the grade crossings in Easton will infect the town with traffic blight. Route 123(Depot Street) in Easton from Route 106 to Route 138 is a 200+ year old road which has become a cut through between Route 495 and Route 24. As of 2007, this stretch of road had an average daily traffic volume of 16,975, concentrated during commuting hours. It has several sharp turns and is narrow such that if a large truck is passing through, a pedestrian or biker must move at least a few feet onto the shoulder.</p> <p>The proposed rail route will cross Depot St., causing major traffic delays. While the crossing is inevitable if the Stoughton alternative is chosen, several mitigation measures would help to minimize the impact on our safety and general quality of life:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drainage, road improvements, and sidewalk installation from Center St. to Route 138.</li> <li>2. intersection studies and improvements at Depot St./Center St., Depot St./Short St., and Depot St./Route 138.</li> <li>3. Signs giving drivers ample notice that there is a train crossing ahead. Given the placement of the road curves relative to the crossing, we will end up with at least some fender benders as people tend to drive fast down the road.</li> </ol> <p>I understand that we cannot fix every road and protect every toad in Southeastern Massachusetts as part of the rail process. We can work together to minimize the impact on our safety and quality of life, particularly in towns like Raynham and Easton with much to lose and little to gain from the project.</p>	<p>Mitigation measures were proposed to address adverse transportation impacts, see Chapter 4.1. General improvements to the transportation system unrelated to the impacts of the South Coast Rail project would not be appropriate to include as mitigation commitments.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-040.01	Lynn A. Dhooge	<p>My name is Lynn Dhooge and I live on Linden Street in North Easton which is right near the proposed Stoughton Alternative of the South Coast Rail Project. I am writing to voice my objections to the Stoughton Alternative on several grounds. First of all, the quality of life which I moved to Linden Street for will be greatly diminished. My family and I moved to Linden Street because of its close proximity to the YMCA, the library, the Main Street area and the NRT Sheep Pasture. Not only that, this area is very quiet and family-oriented. We enjoy hearing the birds sing and the other various sounds of nature. I am not looking forward to have multiple trains passing my house every day with both the air and noise pollution which will result. As I am right near Elm Street and Oliver Street is the next street over, I am assuming the trains will be blowing their whistles at each crossing. I am sure I will be able to hear the Main Street one as well. I grew up across the street from the commuter rail and Amtrak tracks in Jamaica Plain and I moved away from them as quickly as I could. Where I grew up I was not nearly as close to the tracks as I will be with the Stoughton Alternative. However, when those trains went by they shook the house and their whistles were quite loud. This brings me to my next grievance with the proposed Stoughton Alternative. My house is a little over 100 years old. Can I be assured that in no way will the vibrations and pollution that will be emitted by the trains not destroy or in some way adversely effect my home? The homes in this area were built by the workers of the Ames Shovel Company and as stated in the US Army Corps of Engineers report, they are simple wooden structures. In addition to the effects the trains will have on the homes themselves, the trains would destroy the historic district of North Easton by slicing through the very heart of the district. One could argue that there used to be trains that went through the area and that is accurate. However, unless I am mistaken, those were freight trains. It is my understanding that freight trains do not travel at the same speed as passenger trains and I do not believe that the freight trains ran as frequently as proposed by the Stoughton Alternative. My last main concern regarding the Stoughton</p>	<p>The environmental/community character issues cited in the comment were addressed in the noise (4.6) and vibration (4.7) chapters of the FEIS/FEIR, including mitigation measures, as appropriate. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of both passenger and freight railroads in the past. Modern, continuously welded railroad track is expected to cause less vibration than was the case for railroad technologies of the past.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Alternative is the effect it will have on the safety of my children as well as the other children in the area. As I mentioned previously, I live right near the proposed tracks and right near Elm Street and Oliver Street. One of the benefits of living in this neighborhood that initially attracted my family was the sidewalks. My family and I take walks around the neighborhood all the time. I cannot help but worry about what these trains will mean for the children in the neighborhood. I understand it is the parents' obligation to teach their children these things, but if the cause of concern can be averted, that would be the ideal solution.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and I hope that they help you to understand how the proposed Stoughton Alternative will not only effect the environment which I know has been deliberated often, but also how it will effect our history, neighborhoods, our children, our quality of life and our actual homes. Perhaps, it would be best to start with the rapid bus to gauge public interest as opposed to basing the decision on the politicians' interests. I do not believe that the proposed benefit of these trains in any way supersedes the detriment they will cause to those who live in its path.</p>	



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-071.01	Nicole Dion	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>Cost - the \$2 Billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Feasibility - it's unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay f\$275 - \$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of 1 hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.</p> <p>Environment -Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).</p> <p>Well Water Impact -The Commonwealth's preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton's most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.</p> <p>7 traffic crossings - these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.</p> <p>Historical Areas and building compromised - the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.</p>	See response to comment E-063.01.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Dividing the town impedes Police/Fire/Ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 - 50 feet of train passing.</p> <p>The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-027.01	Frederic Dreyer, Jr.	<p>In my frequent drives between Boston and various locations of Attleboro, Easton, Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford and the Cape I am frustrated that state and regional planners and engineers have not considered mono-rail or track service at the median areas of existing highways. I remember some legislators saying mono-rail services work fine in warm climate areas like Disney, but would not be functional in ice and snow. I have displayed news articles about mono-rail public transportation services in the North West, which persuades me that inclement weather is not a justifiable objection. Picture it. Monorail services to and from Boston, swishing along overhead next to traffic jammed highways. Consider also the easy access for maintenance or other problems that occur in transportation systems. Consider the safety and security of people traveling along areas easily accessible by police and other public services in these times of terrorist threats and other dangers in our society today. And if mono-rail cannot be considered, rail tracks, which seem so antiquated to me, could be constructed in the same median locations.</p> <p>Cross-over bridges would need to be reconstructed, and highways widened in some areas, but I feel confident that the cost of this construction would be considerably less than the \$2 Billion cost of current plans, which are unnecessarily complicating the process of accomplishing rail services. Put the rail service (mono or otherwise) along the highway routes that are already there. No marshes. No city or town traffic intersections. No dangerous crossings. Public parking areas could be developed at places along the road route. Some are already there.</p> <p>I wish someone, other than me, would feel this idea at least deserves serious consideration, and not summarily discarded for whatever reason. Back twenty years ago, some people who had devoted much effort to the development of plans then under consideration, asked me to back away from this proposal as it was "way out" and that to consider it would cause further delays in getting the project approved and</p>	<p>Monorail or commuter rail using existing highway right-of-ways was considered in the initial alternatives analysis. However, it was concluded that they would not be practicable for the reasons documented in the Phase I Alternatives Analysis Report (Appendix 3.1-A).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		accomplished. Well, twenty years later I'm hearing and reading the same objections I heard back then, and as planners persist on promoting objectionable plans, costs have risen astronomically. I would hope the idea of routing the rail service within or next to, along existing highway routes would be given consideration. If accomplished it could become a model for cities and towns everywhere as new, faster, safer public transportation services are needed more than ever before as an alternative to costly operation of private automobiles and pollution and traffic congestion become more and more a public concern.	
E-005.01	Erik Edson	Hey, I was wondering if you could point me to where the photos (or figures) mentioned in the South Coast Rail DEIR are displayed. In particular I was looking for all the figures mentioned in the "Visual" section of the report: <a href="http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/DEIS/Vol1/4.5%20Visual.pdf">http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/ma/SouthCoastRail/DEIS/Vol1/4.5%20Visual.pdf</a>	The figures are provided in Volume II (the main text is Volume I).
E-018.01	Roseanne Felago	I live in Stoughton and am against the plan to run train service from Fall River and New Bedford to Boston. These trains won't even stop in Stoughton, so are of no benefit to us residents. These trains will only tie up traffic even more in a busy area. I'm for the No-Build Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.
E-031.01	Joe Fellone	I am an Easton resident who strongly opposes the train to route through Easton. I have lived in Easton for 27 of the last 30 years. I grew up here. I lived in Bridgewater briefly for 3 years, and although not extremely close to the train, within a few miles. My experience in Bridgewater has brought me to learn that the train is not good for suburban communities. Not just the noise, but whenever children are out to play it becomes an extremely dangerous situation in which is not necessary. Also in Bridgewater, it has become a constant issue about emergency service access. I implore you to chose another route that is more suited and away from residential neighborhood. Thanks you for your time.	Noise impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.6. Portions of the right-of-way would be fenced for safety (in developed areas).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-051.01	Paul Fitzpatrick	<p>I am writing this letter express my dismay regarding the proposed train station in North Easton village as shown on the attached sketch.</p> <p>There are many aspects of the proposed plan that are flawed. The first and foremost flaw is the very concept of a "drop off station" in New England. For many years my wife worked in Boston. As my career developed, I would drive her to various commuter stations (rail - Mansfield, Sharon, Canton, MBTA Redline - Quincy Adams, Quincy) and then pick her up at night. Given the variability of New England weather, rare was the day that she would be willing get out of the car and go and wait along the platform. The vast majority of the time it was raining, snowing, sleeting, too windy, too cold, too hot, too humid, etc., etc. for her to get out of the car until the last minute. I was typically surrounded by others whose significant others would also resist leaving the comfort of their car until the last minute. A drop-off station without idling vehicles lining both sides of the adjacent streets is totally unrealistic in New England.</p>	<p>While commutation habits differ among the commuting population and by season, commuters tend to use multiple transportation modes to and from the station. The transportation analysis recognizes this and did not identify significant or unmitigatable impacts.</p>
L-051.02	Paul Fitzpatrick	<p>The narrow configuration of Sullivan Street will only compound the problem. As a result of the foreseeable economy, the local police force will not have the staff to patrol and enforce any imposed parking restrictions. More importantly, the police want to create an atmosphere of cooperation with the local citizens, not to be forced into what would be perceived as a confrontational situation to harass and antagonize them by having them continue to circle the block (adding to the traffic issues).</p>	<p>Enforcement of parking regulations is a responsibility of the applicable jurisdiction.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-051.03	Paul Fitzpatrick	<p>To suggest that commuters will bicycle to a non-urban train station is only slightly less absurd. Both my wife and I regularly use our bicycles for recreation. Neither one of us would consider using a bicycle for commuting to work. First, it is totally ridiculous to consider riding a bicycle in the cold weather, ice and snow for painfully obvious reasons. During the summer heat and humidity, no one will want to ride a bike, or walk any significant distance in these conditions simply because they probably will not have access to a morning shower at their place of employment. Subtract the rainy and other weather related days from those days remaining and the actual number of days that a bicycle would be an attractive and viable alternate to a vehicle results in too few days to be considered a significant design element.</p> <p>Furthermore, the new train station is proposed to be located in the historic North Easton village area, an area established back in the late '1700's, early 1800's. Thus, the streets in the surrounding area are narrow and not at all conducive to creating a dedicated bicycle lane or establishing the other features of a bicycle friendly environment. In fact, due to the location of and the activities at the popular Children's Museum (not identified on the attached South Coast Rail sketch), there was consideration a few years back to make narrow Sullivan Avenue a one way street to provide a safer environment for the number of children attending the daily events at the Museum.</p>	<p>While commuting habits differ among the commuting population and by season, commuters tend to use multiple transportation modes to and from the station. Bicycle accommodations at each station were specifically requested by many members of the public during project scoping.</p> <p>Chapter 4.1- Transportation provides a discussion of potential traffic impacts. The analysis indicated that no significant would occur and that any impacts could be adequately mitigated.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-051.04	Paul Fitzpatrick	<p>If the project proceeds, the "reconstructed parking area" shown on the sketch should be eliminated in its entirety. This parking lot would not only encourage "parking" but would also increase the risk of pedestrian and vehicle encounters due to the very limited maneuvering space available. I would certainly expect that a traffic study would be conducted of the surrounding streets prior to the start of any further engineering plans and that a realistic estimate of vehicular traffic and the South Coast Rail projected pedestrian and bicycle rider count would be accounted for in the study.</p> <p>At the recent 2011 May Town Meeting, the Town of Easton approved the creation of a 48 acre public Governor Ames Park, literally in direct line of sight of the proposed rail station. Although I would not expect the new park to draw the majority of its visitors and children during the peak commuting hours, any traffic studies for this proposed station should include the projected visits to this new park.</p>	Traffic analysis at the station was focused on morning and evening peak periods when the highest volume of traffic would be expected. Recreational access is, therefore, not represented in this analysis.
L-051.05	Paul Fitzpatrick	I attended a public hearing for the proposed train station adjacent to the Roche Bros supermarket. At the hearing, the consultant who had developed the plans stated that he was instructed by the South Coast Rail staff "to make the renderings of the new station area (Roche Bros station) look attractive and cool". He did not include the words efficient, practical, or realistic in his response. It would appear that a similar instruction was issued by the South Coast Rail staff to develop the design concepts at the proposed station in the North Easton Village location, again without the primary design goals of being efficient, practical or realistic.	The design intent of the stations is to be as efficient, practical, cost effective, visually compatible and environmentally sound to the greatest extent practicable.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-052.01	Paul Fitzpatrick	<p>I have never witnessed nor participated in any survey conducted onboard the train or at any of the train stations that I have used (including South Station) regarding the proposed South Coast Rail project. Certainly with the current projected cost, a live person survey would not seem to be an exorbitant cost to determine the potential ridership. The survey could provide some important project information. For example, if the survey simply revealed that a commuter would now board the train in Taunton versus Stoughton, that person should not be defined as a "new" rider boarding the train in Taunton to help justify the project.</p> <p>I have not seen survey forms in the Boston Globe, the Brockton Enterprise or any of the local newspapers along the proposed rail line, which the public could fill out and send in to justify the ridership.</p> <p>I have not seen billboards, illuminated signs or any other invitation to a survey on the side of Route 24 that would allow the South Coast Rail staff to arrive at a determination of how many drivers would opt for the rail or other alternative to the daily drive on Route 24.</p> <p>I have not seen a web based survey on the South Coast Rail website or elsewhere to determine the potential ridership.</p> <p>Although I live within a one mile radius of the proposed rail line, I am not aware of any door-to-door survey conducted by students at Bridgewater State College or Stonehill College, for example, to determine the actual interest of local residents to utilize the proposed rail and if they did, would it be at a loss to another mode of public transportation instead of not driving on Route 24.</p> <p>It would seem that the South Coast Rail management does not want to see the results of a real life survey that would conflict with or require an explanation for why the survey is not applicable.</p>	<p>Ridership information was developed using accepted methodologies and practices, as documented in the DEIS/DEIR and in the FEIS/FEIR, based on available information, as practicable.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>What I have seen, is the projected ridership developed by consulting firms in an attempt to justify the development of the rail extension. One of the main goals of a consulting company is to truly understand the wants and needs of its clientele and the clientele's desired results and then provide them with the backup information and justification to continue their work. This approach frequently encourages future work contracts and assignments for the consulting company. I worked for just such a consulting company in the past.</p> <p>The first and foremost goal for the MBTA should be to achieve the status of "desired mode of transportation" on its present existing routes. Only after this goal is achieved, and I emphasize "only", should the MBTA be allowed to expand. If the proposed South Coast Rail project is allowed to proceed, it is virtually a given that more commuters will be alienated and frustrated as the service on the existing lines continues to deteriorate due to lack of funds. The cost liability for construction, upkeep, maintenance and repair for this project will soon have the citizens of Massachusetts forget the Big Dig project as this rail extension will set a new bar height for out-of-control project costs.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-058.01	Stephen Ford	<p>I am writing to outline my concerns with the proposed “Stoughton Alternative” rail project, with a particular focus on the section through Easton MA. There are two topics that I would like to address. The first being the various deleterious effects of the surface grade crossings in Easton. The second being the noise impact to residents. The following will describe my concerns and highlight some areas in the DEIS/DEIR which I believe are lacking.</p> <p>I have studied at length the traffic volume and average delay times for all streets in Easton, MA. My major concern is the impact of train traffic on emergency response vehicles, which was not included in the DEIS/DEIR. There are two heavily travelled roads (Route 123 and Route 106) that connect the west side (where the police and fire stations are located) to the east side of Easton. The rail will also separate the west side of Easton, MA from the two major hospitals in the area (Brockton Hospital and Good Samaritan Hospital). This concern is supported by the data presented in table 4.1-56. There is an expected total of 950 feet (475 feet each direction) queue length estimated at Route 123, and 550 feet (275 feet each side) of queue length for Route 106, rating these roads now at the Class E Level of Service (LOS). It is assumed there will be freight trains used on this rail, which these traffic numbers do not reflect. Freight trains can consist of 100 cars or more, and their considerable length and slower speed will very likely affect traffic simultaneously on both Route 123 and Route 106. With both major routes blocked, the route through the center of North Easton would be the only alternative, but the high pedestrian concentration and number of connecting streets (about 12) make this alternative fraught with potential delays or hazard to pedestrians. In addition, there is no mention in the DEIS/DEIR that the project has any targets to keep the LOS under a specific level, especially where public safety will be negatively impacted by the emergency response time to businesses and residences.</p>	<p>Freight services is anticipated to continue on the track segments where freight is currently provided (on the Stoughton Line north of Stoughton Station, on the Attleboro Secondary, on the Stoughton Line in Taunton between Longmeadow Road and Weir Junction, and on the New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary south of Weir Junction). No future freight service is currently planned or anticipated on the currently out-of-service Whittenton Branch or Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-058.02	Stephen Ford	The second major gap in the DEIS/DEIR is the failure to mention the potential impact to the safety of young kids that play, live, and attend schools where the rail will be running. The rail through Easton, MA will be passing at street grade directly along the YMCA main building, as well as across the two access roads (Elm Street, and Oliver Street). The rail will also cross at the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School on Route 106 and near the Center School on Route 123. All these areas are frequently used by young children and present a high risk of injury or death.	Safety at grade crossings is addressed in Chapter 4.1. Portions of the right-of-way would be fenced in developed areas to discourage unauthorized access.
E-058.03	Stephen Ford	Lastly, I want to outline the noise concerns. The noise tables within the DEIS/DEIR indicate Route 123 will be the most significantly affected in regards to noise level (>65dBA level). This level is rated as severe. The DEIS/DEIR states a barrier will reduce the level by 10dBA, but this may not bring the noise level out of the severe classification. There is no mention if the project will or will not be bringing all severe noise areas to or under a specific noise threshold. The reason this concerns me further is the statement mentioning that these mitigations would only be done “if cost effective”. This statement implies that the South Coast Rail Project will be making this call and I suspect that due to tight budgets these barriers will be the first to be cut, especially where these barriers don’t resolve the high noise levels.	See Chapter 4.6 for the list of noise barriers found cost effective per the MBTA noise policy.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-058.04	Stephen Ford	<p>In conclusion, the impact to emergency response times, the safety of young children in our town, and the significant noise levels warrant a need for improved passage through Easton, MA. I request further analysis and details in these areas, especially along Route 123. I would like to propose that a non street grade crossing be considered for Route 123. Route 123 is the highest traffic route, the noise level is the greatest, and the central location through Easton, MA makes it the most ideal option to alleviate several issues. I would not only like to see an improved plan to address these concerns, but I think it will be important to have the South Coast Rail make its guarantees clear and legally binding. I recently read a news story regarding the Lakeville rail line and I was shocked to hear that Bridgewater, MA was promised “everything from not exceeding certain speeds as they crossed at-grade streets to installing quad gates to reduce unauthorized access and prevent injuries and accidents, but were not given anything”. I do not want to see these mistakes repeated on this rail project.</p>	<p>Impacts were appropriately considered in the EIS/EIR. Any mitigation commitments in USACE's NEPA Record of Decision and permit conditions will be legally binding. MassDOT's mitigation commitments under MEPA are also enforceable.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-020.01	Jean Fox	<p>Please accept this letter as my support of a commuter train operating along the Stoughton route. Although more expensive, an electric train is environmentally preferable. This recommendation stems from a review of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the state’s Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). I am wholly supportive of this alternative in light of the economic benefits as well as the long-term environmental implications.</p> <p>The DEIS for the South Coast Rail project was adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) as the state-required DEIR. MassDOT identifies the Stoughton alternative as the preferred route for providing optimal transportation service while heeding environmental priorities and offering smart growth benefits for the region. This route also keeps commute times to a reasonable minimum, thus providing a convenient, reliable, and feasible commuter option for the South Coast. As a selectman in the Town of Freetown and a workforce development professional, I am pleased with the level of effort undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers in this comprehensive DEIS. In addition, I appreciate the commitment of MassDOT in working with the 31 corridor communities to identify pitfalls, propose options, encourage constructive commentary by all stakeholders, and undertake a forward thinking strategy of transit-oriented design and development to help steer those communities toward smart growth options and plans.</p> <p>With the advent of South Coast Rail, estimates peg economic growth at about \$500 million annually, with some 3,500 long-term employment opportunities by 2030. Rail construction jobs will provide an additional 7,000 – 8,000 well paying jobs. The South Coast urban hubs, in particular, have struggled with significantly higher levels of unemployment and lower growth rates in recent years; as a result, these jobs and the rail will infuse much-needed energy into the local economy. The connection to Boston and other areas in the Commonwealth will serve to join a</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>growing, vibrant region to the rest of the state, significantly bolstering the human resource potential of Massachusetts. In addition, the 70 priority preservation sites will receive the attention they deserve as a result of this important project.</p> <p>I thank you for the significant and comprehensive effort expended on behalf of South Coast Rail and the people and economy of the region.</p>	
E-007.01	Bobbi Fried	<p>Given that the DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, we respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. Thank you for your consideration.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>
E-011.01	Aimee Fried-Hardy	<p>Given that the DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, we respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. Thank you for your consideration.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-019.01	Joseph Garies	<p>I have an opportunity to purchase a parcel of land located at 775 Davol St Fall River MA, my question to you, Is the south coast rail project 100% approved ? will this property be part of the project ? will it be taken in emanate domain ? or if property is needed for project they give you fair market value ? Please answer any questions you can, and if there is a question you can not answer please direct me in the right direction, Thank You</p>	<p>775 Davol St is within the area of the proposed Fall River Depot Station. Refer to Figure 4.2-28 in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR for mapping of the proposed acquisitions for this station (including parcel numbers). MassDOT would first attempt to negotiate with property owners to require the necessary land, but would use eminent domain if an agreement could not be reached. Property acquisitions would be conducted in accordance with federal and state requirements to ensure fair treatment of property owners. Further information on the process is provided in this fact sheet prepared by MassDOT:  <a href="http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/downloads/row/rowemi.pdf">http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/downloads/row/rowemi.pdf</a></p> <p>The project is not 100% approved at this time. See Section 1.7 for information on the next steps in the decision making process.</p>
E-012.01	Louis Gitto	<p>Given that the DEIS on the South Coast Rail is over 2,500 pages, I respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, I request an additional 60 days.</p> <p>I received a hard copy of the document on Monday of this week. There is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments. In reviewing correspondence on this project, I note that Mass EOT requested that the MEPA office defer issuing a Certificate on the ENF and a Scope for the State DEIR on January 29, 2009 and promptly received a time extension on January 30, 2009 in order to provide supplemental information. To require the public, which has less familiarity with the project, to review the document and submit comments in such a short timeframe - on its face - seems unreasonable for such a voluminous document and for a project with such far-reaching implications. Now I know that you have been very meticulous in dealing with this project, and thank you for your effort. It has taken well over 2 years to get to this point. A 60-day extension for public input seems very reasonable.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.01	Louis Gitto	<p>Let me begin by pointing out some major inconsistencies between the MassDOT's South Coast Rail (SCR) Project preferred option and the AMTRAK concept of what is needed in the future to allow Boston, which is the principal economic engine of Massachusetts, to be connected by rail to the rest of the Northeast Corridor. The AMTRAK concepts are found in two reports available on the AMTRAK website under the heading "Northeast Corridor Vision and Plans"</p> <p><a href="http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?c=Page&amp;pagename=am%2FLayout&amp;p=1237608345018&amp;cid=1241245669222">http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?c=Page&amp;pagename=am%2FLayout&amp;p=1237608345018&amp;cid=1241245669222</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Master Plan, June 2010 (cover indicates date MAY 2010)</li> <li>• A Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor, September 2010 (September 27, 2010)</li> </ul> <p>These inconsistencies call into question the useful life of the SCR project when measured against cost and expected service. These reports show that project success relies on passing along future costs (from about 2030 onward) to other entities (most likely AMTRAK) to solve a public problem that should be addressed cooperatively rather than competitively.</p> <p>I will show that there are remarkable parallels between the long range planning for this project and planning done by predecessor Massachusetts Transportation planners when they created the Quincy Bottleneck on the Middleboro Route (taking a four track system and making it a single train track system when the MBTA Red Line was extended).</p> <p>It is important to highlight that the two AMTRAK reports referenced in this letter became available in 2010, over a year after the deadline for public comments on the SCR ENF. The information in these reports is very relevant to the options to be considered in the final determinations of the Corps of Engineers. Had the information been available earlier, more of the options that Mass DOT rejected should</p>	<p>Amtrak plans for the Northeast Corridor are independent from the South Coast Rail project. Both Amtrak reports include the additional future MBTA service to New Bedford and Fall River in their baseline. The NEC is a shared corridor with operating rights granted to the MBTA, Amtrak and various freight railroads. As the Stoughton Electric Alternative proposes a service plan that is an extension of the existing Stoughton service, adding capacity through this section of the NEC is not required by the South Coast Rail project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>have been included in the DEIS. The AMTRAK documents indicate that the system capacity of the Northeast Corridor, which the MassDOT's preferred option relies on, will be exceeded by 2030. Thus the useful life of the SCR project would only be about 15 years after it is built at a cost of \$1.88 billion.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.02	Louis Gitto	<p>ESTIMATES OF NUMBER OF TRAINS AMTRAK NEEDS UNDERSTATED</p> <p>The AMTRAK - Northeast Corridor Master Plan Final Report June 2010 Part 2 page 2 calls for 10 more Acela trains per day on the NEC line see text below.</p> <p>Amtrak's 2030 plans call for increases in service between Boston and New York, from 38 daily trains (19 round trips) to 48 trains (24 daily round trips), providing hourly Acela Express and near hourly Regional services throughout the day. Five additional trains are projected to operate out of Boston over the "Inland Route" through Worcester to Springfield and New Haven. Amtrak is also planning up to 30 minutes of trip-time improvements between Boston and New York by 2030 which will benefit from proposed additional passing capability on this segment to maintain existing levels of reliability for all users.</p> <p>Compare this to the 2008 SCR ENF (see Chapter 4 - pages 6 &amp; 7 ... sections of text extracted below), where Mass DOT used a 2003 Report and the following assumptions to support the decision to use the NEC line for the SCR project (see yellow highlights added to this text to show the stark difference). You'll note the service difference.</p> <p>4.2.1 2030 Operating Plan</p> <p>The Northeast Corridor is the busiest passenger rail line in the United States in terms of passengers and service frequency. As the only corridor offering true high speed rail service in the country, it is a vital component of Amtrak's current and future operation. To protect its interest in the portion of the corridor that it does not own, between the Rhode Island state line and South Station. Amtrak entered into an agreement with the MET A for the use and maintenance of the corridor. The term of this agreement extends beyond 2030. Therefore, in developing a 2030 baseline operating plan both Amtrak and the MBTA future plans for the corridor needed to be considered, consistent with their agreement.</p>	<p>The operations analysis (Appendix 3.2-A) used the best available information at the time of that study. Current studies including those cited include the South Coast Rail project, including ongoing MBTA and Amtrak studies. Whatever discrepancies may have existed on past work have been reconciled on the ongoing NEC studies and do not change the findings of this report.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MBTA - Northeast Corridor: The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. One additional train was added during each peak period to the all of the commuter lines operating on the Northeast Corridor between South Station and Providence with the exception of the Framingham/Worcester service. This resulted in an additional four trains operating in the peak periods.</li> <li>• MBTA - Old Colony Railroad (OCRR): The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. It was found that the current operating plan on the OCRR mainline could not support additional trains. Alternatives involving the OCRR could only be extensions of existing service unless major infrastructure improvements were to be constructed, so no additional service was added as part of the 2030 "No Build" to the OCRR.</li> <li>• Amtrak — Northeast Corridor: The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline and then a plan formulated by Amtrak as part of a previous study in 2003 (MTA/LIRR East Side Access Project and the Metro-North/ConnDOT New Haven Line Traction Power Study) was used resulting in the following changes: add one AM departure, add one PM departure, and two PM arrivals, and subtract one AM arrival</li> </ul> <p>The above information does not address the technological change to allow for a 220 mph train system proposed by AMTRAK, which will require major structural changes noted in the report below.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.03	Louis Gitto	<p>ESTIMATES OF AMTRAK SYSTEM NEEDS NOT ADDRESSED</p> <p>The AMTRAK Report A Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor September 2010 indicates that AMTRAK proposes to link Boston to Washington DC with a 220 mph train system with increased train frequency ...to compete with short range air travel within the NEC. Portions of this report are shown below. I have included my comments in the report. To distinguish between the two, I'll indent and use smaller font for my comments. Page 7 of this September 2010 report highlights a major flaw in the overall rail plan, represented in the following quote.</p> <p>'The 2010-2030 NEC Master Plan developed by Amtrak, in consultation with states, commuter rail and freight operators, and other agencies, calls for \$52 billion in investments to cover needed system repair and upgrades and some capacity enhancements to help handle the projected 60% increase in intercity and commuter trips in the corridor by 2030 alone. Unfortunately, whatever added capacity is realized under this plan would be exceeded by 2030, limiting Amtrak's ability to add service, especially higher-speed Acela trains which utilize more track capacity due to their higher speeds.'" (Note that the Northeast Corridor Master Plan Final Report June 2010 is referred to here as "The 2010-2030 NEC Master Plan".)</p> <p>Pages 10 and 11 of this September 2010 report provides a conceptual alignment that parallels the line from Boston to the Route 128 Rail Station and then turns on a new route to Woonsocket RI and on to Hartford, CT and on to NYC. I have included the entire text of the introduction to this section along with the entire text of the New York City to Boston discussion and highlighted the portion from just "South of Route 128 to Boston".</p> <p>The Mass DOT's discussion of its preferred option in the February 2011 SCR DEIS expresses what appear to be extremely high costs and enormous social challenges along this portion of the South Coast Rail route (operated by AMTRAK) if more traffic is added to this route (see detailed</p>	<p>MBTA and MassDOT would continue to be involved in planning with Amtrak for the NEC to ensure commuter rail needs are also accommodated. "A Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor" examines alignments that the South Coast Rail project would not operate over. The current alignment for the South Coast Rail project would not support speeds beyond the current maximum of 150 miles per hour.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		discussion further on). Yet the MassDOT seems to be helping to increase this traffic by selecting any Northeast Corridor option. Mass DOT could take a longer view and help AMTRAK to solve a problem rather than exacerbating one that it knows will occur.	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.04	Louis Gitto	<p>MBTA LONG TERM SYSTEM EXPANSION NEEDS NOT ADDRESSED</p> <p>Remember the 2008 SCR ENF (see Chapter 4 - pages 6 &amp; 7 ... sections of text extracted below)? The planning assumptions relating to system expansion are shown below - in yellow - and by the opportunity to double deck the trains and perhaps add two cars.</p> <p>4.2.1 2030 Operating Plan</p> <p>The Northeast Corridor is the busiest passenger rail line in the United States in terms of passengers and service frequency. As the only corridor offering true high speed rail service in the country, it is a vital component of Amtrak's current and future operation. To protect its interest in the portion of the corridor that it does not own, between the Rhode Island state line and South Station, Amtrak entered into an agreement with the MBTA for the use and maintenance of the corridor. The term of this agreement extends beyond 2030. Therefore, in developing a 2030 baseline operating plan both Amtrak and the MBTA future plans for the corridor needed to be considered, consistent with their agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MBTA - Northeast Corridor: The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. One additional train was added during each peak period to the all of the commuter lines operating on the Northeast Corridor between South Station and Providence with the exception of the Framingham/Worcester service. This resulted in an additional four trains operating in the peak periods.</li> <li>• MBTA - Old Colony Railroad (OCRR): The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline. It was found that the current operating plan on the OCRR mainline could not support additional trains. Alternatives involving the OCRR could only be extensions of existing service unless major infrastructure improvements were to be constructed, so no additional service was added as part of the 2030 "No Build" to the OCRR.</li> <li>• Amtrak - Northeast Corridor: The April 2008 schedule was used as a baseline and then a plan formulated by Amtrak as part of a previous study in 2003 (MTA/LIRR East Side Access</li> </ul>	<p>All MassDOT and MBTA planned expansion projects have been accounted for in the studies mentioned including the South Coast Rail project. South Coast Rail projections have also been provided to Amtrak and the FRA for use in their studies.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Project and the Metro-North/ConnDOT New Haven Line Traction Power Study) was used resulting in the following changes: add one AM departure, add one PM departure, and two PM arrivals, and subtract one AM arrival.</p> <p>Think about a SCR system that should provide service for the foreseeable long-term future, yet according to currently available planning information the system will be at capacity by 2030 (15 years and \$1.88 billion from the completion of construction). Unless the Back Bay to Forest Hills bottleneck is broken (at an estimated \$2.4 billion cost) the MBTA forever will be constrained from adding more than one train during rush-hours to 4 lines, no more trains to a 5th line and will provide a total of no more than 3 trains each during rush hour for the two cities (Fall River and New Bedford) it is being built to serve. The SCR system planners appear to have missed AMTRAK's requirements. So it seems that the real SCR cost will be much higher (estimated to increase by \$2.4 billion), the real construction timeframe will be much longer, and the disruption severe. This assessment does not even take into account the AMTRAK needs for increased trains of high speed service.</p> <p>The problem with the Mass DOT analysis is that Mass DOT did not have (or use) the 2010 information available to determine the overall future impacts on its systems or the AMTRAK system in terms of useful system life, cost and likely future disruption during the planned life of the SCR project. And apparently Mass DOT did not plan its system beyond 2030.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.05	Louis Gitto	<p><b>THE BACK BAY TO FOREST HILLS BOTTLENECK</b></p> <p>The SCR DEIS section, 1.4.6.2 PRACTICABILITY MEASURE, describes significant disruption of the Orange Line service, disruption of some park land and permanent removal of other park land an increase in construction time of several years and an increase in cost of \$2.4 billion if the Attleboro Alternative is selected. According to the SCR DEIS - all of this is caused by the need for 6 more trains inserted into the NEC system. This section also indicates that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reviewed this alternative and considered it infeasible and sent an email to that effect to the Army Corps on March 3, 2010. Note that this email was received prior to either AMTRAK reports noted above.</p> <p>The expected bottleneck between the Back Bay and the Forest Hill Stations is described on pages 23 and 24 of the SCR DEIS Executive summary a portion of which appears below (with highlights added).</p> <p><b>1.4.6.2 PRACTICABILITY MEASURE</b></p> <p>The Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives perform well across the board on the practicability measure. The Rapid Bus alternative does not perform well on the practicability measure, particularly on the cost per rider, which has the Rapid Bus Alternative at a cost of close to \$100 per rider.</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternatives perform poorest overall on the practicability measure. The network simulation analysis indicated that the Attleboro Alternatives are operationally infeasible as they do not meet the MBTA on-time standard in the morning peak and would experience even worse on-time performance during the evening peak commute. The Attleboro Alternatives would also contribute to a cascading negative impact on the on-time performance of the entire southerly commuter rail system, including Worcester, Franklin, Needham and Providence commuter rail lines.</p> <p>In order to address the operational infeasibility of the Attleboro Alternative, capacity on the NEC would have to be</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>increased through construction of a fourth track along the NEC between Forest Hills Station and Back Bay Station. An analysis was conducted of the construction costs and schedule implications as well as key property and other impacts associated with the construction of a fourth track. Between Readville Station and Forest Hills Station the fourth track would be constructed on the north side of the NEC within existing real estate. Between Forest Hills Station and Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue the fourth track would be constructed on the south side of the NEC requiring demolition of the existing southern retaining wall and expansion of the existing cut section. Several Orange Line stations would need to be reconstructed in this area to accommodate the addition of the fourth track on the north side of the NEC. In addition to the multiple overhead bridge crossings, this section of the corridor contains a large amount of area where the existing track cut section is covered with parks or other recreational spaces. In these sections, the existing parks on the roofs would be removed and then replaced after the cut section has been widened. This includes Southwest Corridor Park, a 4.7 mile, 52-acre linear park stretching from Forest Hills Station to Back Bay Station that opened in 1987 and is owned and maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Permanent impacts to Southwest Corridor Park would result from the loss of 2.85 acres of parkland, and temporary impacts would include the loss of 8.54 acres of parkland throughout construction, for approximately 3-6 years at each construction zone. Existing utilities located along the corridor, including Southwest Corridor Park, on the south side of the existing tracks would need to be relocated in order to extend the cut section to the south. Between Ruggles Station/Massachusetts Avenue and Back Bay Station the corridor enters a cut section with a structural cap that runs under the Southwest Corridor Park north towards Back Bay and along a dense urban setting with many residential and commercial buildings, including high-rise structures, in the South End abutting the right-of-way. To avoid displacement impacts to the large number of business</p>	



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>owners and residents, the fourth track would be constructed within the right-of-way of the Orange Line. This would avoid the need to widen the cut section and demolish numerous residential and commercial properties. The MBTA Orange Line service would be relocated to a new tunnel extension under the NEC approximately two miles from just east of Back Bay to just east of Ruggles Station. This would require the reconstruction of two Orange Line stations (Massachusetts Avenue and Back Bay). In order to construct the new tunnel underneath the existing Orange Line tracks and connect in to the existing tracks at the ends, Orange Line service from Tufts Medical Center to Forest Hills would need to be suspended and replaced with bus service for two years.</p> <p>The length of time it would take to complete the fourth track would be approximately 10 to -12 years. Even considering that some of the fourth track construction activities could coincide with other construction activities for the Attleboro Alternative, the total construction period would be more than double that of any of the other alternatives under consideration, for which construction is estimated at 4 to -5 years and would far exceed the four-year construction schedule outlined in Governor Patrick's South Coast Rail, A Plan for Action.</p> <p>There are several substantial cost items associated with the construction of the fourth track, including a 1.4-mile new tunnel extension of the Orange Line and retrofitting the existing Orange Line tunnel to accommodate commuter rail trains (with new ventilation), shuttle service for two years to replace the Orange Line during construction, reconstruction of Orange Line stations and construction and reconstruction of bridges, pedestrian overpasses, cut section roofs and retaining walls, and property acquisition costs. Construction of a fourth track to avoid the above delays would result in an additional construction cost for the Attleboro Alternative of more than \$2.4B. This places it far above the other alternatives and even above the Middleborough Alternative, which was eliminated from further consideration earlier in</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>the screening process, partially due to cost.</p> <p>The potential impacts, construction costs and construction schedule and other aspects of the fourth track along the NEC would render implementation of this infrastructure requirement infeasible. In a previous study, the FRA (a cooperating federal agency) also explored the option to expand capacity of the NEC north of Canton Junction Station. However, due to substantial constraints, it was proposed that such capacity expansion end at Forest Hills in Jamaica Plain. In reviewing the RA1LSIM capacity simulations conducted for the Attleboro Alternative, the FRA has indicated to the Corps that it considers this alternative infeasible and appropriate to delete from any further environmental review/consideration. (Email correspondence from FRA to Army Corps, March 3, 2010.)</p> <p>There are remarkable parallels between the lack of long range planning shown by the Mass DOT on this project and planning done by predecessor Massachusetts Transportation planners when they created the Quincy Bottleneck on the Middleboro Route (taking a four track system and making it a single train track system when the MBTA Red Line was extended).</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.06	Louis Gitto	<p>SYNOPSIS OF IMPACTS OF PLANNING INCONSISTENCIES - AND REQUESTS FOR ACTION</p> <p>Based on the three factors noted above, underestimation of the number of trains AMTRAK needs, AMTRAK structural needs, and long-term expansion requirements for MBTA system, it seems inevitable that the Back Bay to Forest Hills Bottleneck Will occur reasonably soon. This bottleneck is very much analogous to the bottleneck Mass DOT described on the Middleboro line at Quincy Station.</p> <p>The problem with the Mass DOT analysis is that Mass DOT did not have (or use) the 2010 information available to determine the overall future impacts on its systems or the AMTRAK system in terms of useful system life, cost and likely future disruption during the planned life of the SCR project. It is shocking that a Massachusetts Transportation Agency would be willing to make a similar mistake (create a costly bottleneck) a second time and do it on a project where it already pointed out the past planning error.</p> <p>Think about a SCR system that should provide service for the foreseeable long-term future, yet according to planning information will be at capacity by 2030 (15 years and \$1.88 billion after construction). Unless the Back Bay to Forest Hills bottleneck is broken (at an estimated \$2.4 billion cost) the MBTA forever will be constrained from adding more than one train during rush-hours to 4 lines, no more trains to a 5th line and will provide a total of no more than 3 trains each during rush hour for the two cities (Fall River and New Bedford) it is being built to serve. The SCR system planners appear to have missed AMTRAK's requirements. So it seems that the real SCR cost will be much higher (estimated to increase by \$2.4 billion), the real construction timeframe will be much longer, and the disruption severe. This total cost and timeframe exceeds the Middleboro full alternative.</p>	<p>The Stoughton Electric Alternative proposes a service plan that is an extension of the existing Stoughton service. Adding capacity through this section of the NEC is not required by the South Coast Rail project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.07	Louis Gitto	<p>REQUEST FOR ACTION BASED ON PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>The Mass DOT continues to recommend its preferred option, which will add trains on the Northeast Corridor line. This will just get the MBTA system to 2030 even while AMTRAK (in its Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor, September 2010 Report) proposes to use the same portion of the route for a much improved service between Boston and Washington DC via NYC. You'll note that AMTRAK chose to analyze an alternative that continued to provide service to Rhode Island (a state that has always had AMTRAK service). Other viable alternatives would have bypassed Rhode Island entirely.</p>	<p>The NEC Futures project is still in the planning stages. Alignments have not yet been determined.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.08	Louis Gitto	<p>Based on all the above, I request that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Corps of Engineers require Mass DOT to perform a more integrated analysis of this project taking account of AMTRAK and other's plans along with a longer project - and system - time horizon,</li> <li>• that the Corps of Engineers require the Middleboro options (full and partial) to be put back into the group of viable options (because it may not be more costly - when taking a more realistic view of existing plans) and</li> <li>• that the Corps of Engineers require a re-analysis such that the rapid bus option be considered as at least a short term measure</li> </ul> <p>I further request that Corps of Engineers request the Federal Railroad Administration to review its March 3, 2010 decision in light of the two 2010 AMTRAK reports referenced and provide the Army Corps an updated decision. From all appearances, the FRA's decision was based on a flawed or at least outdated assessment (a 2003 report) of the potential uses and requirements of the NEC line. Please provide me with a copy of the FRA's reconsidered decision when it is received by the Army Corps.</p> <p>In order to provide this reconsidered letter, it would seem that the FRA will have to weigh the competing requirements and options of Mass DOT and AMTRAK over a longer time horizon and consider and decide if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Mass DOT has to develop a system that does or does not include putting further stress on the NEC line between Back Bay and Forest Hills while still providing service to FR&amp;NB and allows or does not allow the MBTA opportunity for current service expansion beyond 2030 on its NEC line</li> <li>• the AMTRAK will continue to use the NEC line for current and expanded or no expansion for Acela and normal service beyond 2030 ahead of the upgraded high speed rail service</li> <li>• the AMTRAK will be allowed to develop a 220 mph high speed rail system that does or does not service Rhode Island (use or not use the NEC line)</li> </ul>	<p>The South Coast Rail project has incorporated all relevant Amtrak and other planned expansions into the evaluation of the Stoughton Electric Alternative. The Middleborough Alternative has been removed from further consideration based on analyses conducted in the ENF and leading up to the DEIS/DEIR. The Rapid Bus has also been re-evaluated. Based on the results of the evaluation and pursuant to coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, the Rapid Bus Alternative was eliminated from further consideration.</p> <p>Future studies (such as the ongoing NEC Futures Study <a href="http://www.necfuture.com/about/">http://www.necfuture.com/about/</a> ) all recognize the high burden on the NEC but cannot assume they can simply eliminate existing operations to serve their need. Those analyses are beyond the scope of the South Coast Rail project. While the Stoughton Alternative would provide service to the South Coast Communities, it would not substantially increase demand on the NEC corridor, as it represents a geographic extension of an existing service and not a substantial increase in the frequency of service on the NEC segment. Analyses of the overall performance issues of the NEC, including those potentially resulting from other projects, are therefore beyond the scope of the South Coast Rail Project</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>This letter will determine if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass DOT has to reopen options for service to FR&amp;NB</li> </ul> <p>AMTRAK can rely on continued use of its line to provide the kind of service it has provided with expansion of capabilities/service short of 220mph high speed rail service until the 220 mph high speed rail service is available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMTRAK should plan on or abandon the 220mph high speed rail route through Rhode Island</li> </ul> <p>If the FRA determines that the SCR service will not use the NEC line, the Mass DOT will also have to reassess its Middleboro Alternative, and hopefully recognize that a rail line can be developed through Middleboro to Boston at a lower total system cost when looking at the planning time horizon available in the current reports.</p>	
L-053.09	Louis Gitto	<p>The Mass DOT has not done an analysis of the system taking the trains from the Stoughton line and giving them to the Attleboro line as was recommended as an analysis that the Stoughton Board of Selectmen requested in its letter to the Army Corps of 4-13-2010. Please require them to provide that analysis.</p>	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been dismissed from further consideration, as described in Chapter 3, Alternatives. The Purpose and Need statement for this project established it should not negatively impact other transportation systems in order to accommodate this project. As such, alternatives that would impact existing services were eliminated from further consideration.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-053.10	Louis Gitto	<p>Without repeating all the information I submitted in my (January 7, 2009) letter responding to the SCR ENF and my (March 15, 2009) letter responding to the Supplemental SCR ENF in the text of this letter, I submit them as attachments for inclusion as part of my response to this DEIS (including two PowerPoint files - named "STOUGHTON CONCERNS" and "just for fun, let's design a year 2000 transportation system" that were included in the January 7, 2009 letter.</p> <p>The "STOUGHTON CONCERNS" PowerPoint presentation continues to show the severe impact the preferred option would have on the Town of Stoughton.</p> <p>The need to depress the rail is very high. I don't fault the Commonwealth's willingness to spend a great deal for upgrades in Fall River and New Bedford, but take great offense to Mass DOT summarily setting aside the needs of Stoughton. I request that these concerns be addressed immediately by Mass DOT - well in advance of the FEIS - so that Stoughton can review the response to these concerns and make sure that these concerns have been adequately addressed.</p> <p>Here are other points that need to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a start, not having added time to review a 2500 page DEIS beyond 60 days is hard to accept.</li> <li>• According to some analysts, the cost of gasoline may reach \$5 this year, and consumer pressure on the global market will likely raise the price much higher before the project is built. The effect of these cost shifts on the use of the roadway system (increased car-pooling and bus use) may decrease traffic to the point that travel times on the Route 24 roadway system will drop dramatically. This scenario should be modeled and evaluated critically as part of the bus alternative.</li> <li>• The cost of the roadway improvements and the environmental impact of these improvements include the cost of bringing the Route 24 Interchanges up to Federal highway standards. It is my understanding that the State</li> </ul>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>wants to bring the Route 24 Interchanges up to Federal highway standards anyway. These costs and environmental impacts should not be attributed to the South Coast Rail Project. Instead they should be part of what the State will plan to do anyway. These improvements should become the baseline evaluating the bus alternative rather than the cost of the alternative. The bus alternative should be analyzed and evaluated in this fashion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State has been and is considering many options for improving its roadways and getting increased revenue to do this, including open road tolling (a method now used in other states and other countries) in recognition that the public pays a high cost for peak traffic during rush hours. One of the effects of open road tolling would be to increase car-pooling and bus use, getting people off the road and thus decreasing travel-time for the bus alternative. This scenario should be modeled and evaluated critically as part of the bus alternative.</li> <li>• Construction cost per rider is huge. The Capital Cost of the Stoughton Route is \$1,884,465,000; the number of round trip riders (even including those that may switch from bus to rail) is 4790 (those called inbound riders). This computes to \$393,416.49 per rider. I believe that the DEIS indicates on a per trip basis the cost per rider on the Stoughton Electric Route is \$45.76 where SCR-DOT counts a trip as a one-way ride. On the basis of a 22 day work month and 2 way ridership, this would amount to a cost of <math>22 \times 2 \times \\$45.76 = \\$2013.44</math> {See Chapter 3, page 131, table 3.3-11}. That's a pretty high monthly cost to get one car off the road. And it is an 87% subsidy given that the zone 9 fare is \$265/month. There are better ways to use our existing transportation system at a much lower cost and environmentally beneficial manner. See note on increased car-pooling based on likely open road tolling.</li> </ul>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-059.01	Mary Jane Golden	<p>I believe that the Southcoast Rail will have tremendous economic implications for the greater New Bedford area, which sorely needs economic relief. People can get and keep jobs in Boston and still live in the scenic Southcoast, where they will spend their wages in local businesses. It will be the lifeblood of this region.</p> <p>I support the Stoughton Alternative with electric mode to best meet the future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston. I believe, after fully reading the study, that this alternative best balances transportation and environmental benefits with environmental impacts.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
E-052.01	David Goldrick	I am witting to show support for the Commuter rail project. I beliefs that the Stoughton Alternative with diesel and electric engines is the best possible way to keep the environmental impact and greatly adding to the opportunities to Fall River and New Bedford.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-009.01	Guillermo Gonzalez	<p>It could be somewhat surprising to you hearing about the psychological reasons for my support for this public transportation project. The environmental impact cannot be clearly studied and assessed if the social human environment impact is not properly assessed. My support for this project that will have a very significant psychological impact on the entire southeastern Massachusetts population starts with selfish reasons. Up to this time, everything outside route 495 is perceived as another place; not part of Boston. We rely on private transportation and a few buses to connect to Boston. The main scientific, medical, psychiatric and academic activity occurs in Boston. At my age, I will prefer to delegate the driving part and be able to study while being transported to Boston in an efficient and fast public mode of transportation.</p> <p>While there is a sense of personal partial disconnect between my professional activity and the one that is happening in Boston, it is also true that on a larger macro-social scale, the same thing happens between the population in Boston and us here in "outside Boston"; New Bedford's population. My intention is not of accusing a lesser priority level for us "outside of Boston" regarding transportation projects, but to encourage the consideration of the improvement of the sense of belonging of the population of New Bedford as part of the state of Massachusetts. The benefits for us are not limited to the ease of transportation, increased economical activity and increased access to jobs and professional activities, but also the sense of pride of being an integral and important region of Massachusetts.</p> <p>I hope that in your final report you address the environmental impact of the South Coast Rail project and the psychological benefits to the self-esteem and to the feelings of the south coastal population of being an integral and important part of the population of Massachusetts.</p>	<p>Socioeconomic consequences of the project are addressed in Chapter 4.3, and effects on Transportation are addressed in Chapter 4.1. However, psychological benefits are not within the scope of issues required to be addressed in an EIS/EIR.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-069.01	Linda Grubb	<p>In general, for a document the size of the DEIS/DEIR, the comment period was too short. As a result of the timing, my comments deal only with issues in Lakeville. The maps used for resources in the Assonet Cedar Swamp are difficult to read. Inconsistencies or discrepancies in the DEIS/DEIR makes the document difficult to understand.</p>	<p>Although the complexity of the document is acknowledged, the DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA. An executive summary was provided to help with reader understanding.</p> <p>It is not clear from the comment which maps are being referred to.</p>
L-069.02	Linda Grubb	<p>The Executive Summary Page1-9 Southern Triangle Rail Infrastructure New Bedford Main Line: states "...single track with three sidings from Myricks Junction to New Bedford." Page 3-64 New Bedford Main Line Track Infrastructure states "A short segment of the line would be double track south of Myricks Junction, 0.8 miles. The remainder of the line would be single-track, with the exception of 1.8-mile double-track section in Freetown and a 2.7-mile section in New Bedford." And then on Page 4.18-10 Table 4.18-5 Non-Tidal River and Stream Crossing - New Bedford Main Line Waterbody: Cedar Swamp (River?) Improvements: Expansion to 2 tracks." Will there be double tracks through the Assonet Cedar Swamp?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 3-37, Table 3.2-16 Summary of Railroad Bridges – New Bedford Main Line does not show all bridges that carry the rail line through the Assonet Cedar Swamp, in particular, the stone bridge over the unnamed stream just south of Peirce Brook.</li> </ul>	<p>Figure 4.10-1 shows the general location of the Assonet Cedar Swamp. Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8 show the New Bedford Mainline would be single track through the Assonet Cedar Swamp.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-069.03	Linda Grubb	<p>Page 4.1-8 Grade Crossings, a new grade crossing is mentioned for Lakeville. Where would this new grade crossing be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 4.1-85 (Berkley's) Mill Street and Adams Lane private crossings are proposed to be closed. Page 4.8-12 says "The Pierce (Peirce) and Haskins Cemetery (Map No. La.024), which is located 200 feet east of the Fall River Secondary right-of-way and is accessible from Adams Lane in Berkley, contains approximately 45 slate and granite headstones dating from 1785 to 1892. Page 4.8-38/39 says "specific areas and resources could require sound insulation or barrier mitigation to reduce noise impacts. An elastic mat may be placed under the ballast to absorb or reduce vibration levels" Listed is Adams Lane grade crossing: Peirce and Haskins Cemetery, Lakeville. Will the Adams Lane crossing be closed? If so how will Lakeville access this historic cemetery?</li> </ul>	<p>As shown in FEIS/FEIR figure 4.1-50, there are no new at-grade crossings proposed in Lakeville. One existing at-grade crossing would remain (Malone St.) and two at-grade crossings would be closed.</p> <p>The Adams Lane private at-grade crossing will be closed for safety. Peirce and Haskins Cemetery is an inactive historic cemetery (graves date from 1785 to 1892) and there is no need for regular public access. During the land acquisition process, MassDOT would identify the owners/family associated with the cemetery and develop a way to maintain access if necessary. It is not uncommon for such small historic cemeteries to lack road access.</p>
L-069.04	Linda Grubb	<p>Page 4.10-7 Private Open Space states "1,000-acre parcel...in Lakeville," The Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary crosses the town line into Freetown. "The Fall River Secondary passes nearby" Fall River Secondary passes through the western edge of the Sanctuary. "This property, which is not opened to the public..." Sanctuary does not post No Trespassing signs. Signs posted identify property as Massachusetts Audubon Society and list permitted activities. The issue with public use is access. Very few access points exist.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.10 has been modified to remove the statement that the Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary is not open to the public.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-069.05	Linda Grubb	<p>Page 4.14-100 "The CAPS analysis shows.....The higher rates of train traffic on the New Bedford Main Line and the Fall River Secondary would result in a slight decrease in connectivity through the Assonet Cedar Swamp area in Lakeville when compared to the existing connectedness."</p> <p>Page 4.1-18 Mass Coastal Freight Operation "New Bedford is serviced two days per week (except during "sludge season", when it is serviced three times per week), typically Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fall River is services three days per week (except during "sludge season", when it is services two days per week), typically Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays." I find it difficult to believe that the planned increase in the number and speed of trains travelling through the Assonet Cedar Swamp will result in only a slight decrease in connectivity. Any fencing will also decrease connectivity.</p>	<p>Fencing the right-of-way would not be required in undeveloped areas.</p> <p>The reconstruction of the active rail line would not create a new canopy gap in Assonet Cedar Swamp, and would therefore not change the existing forest interior or edge conditions. The frequency of train service is discussed in Chapter 3--30 minute headways in peak period and 3-hour headways off peak. There would be no passenger service overnight.</p>
L-069.06	Linda Grubb	<p>Page 4.16-18/19 Wetlands Along the Rail Right-of-Way Through Lakeville states "The Assonet River and Cedar Swamp River both flow under the New Bedford Branch of the right-of-way in Cedar Swamp (Wetland LK-6 and LK-7)."</p> <p>There appears to be some confusion with names of water bodies within the Assonet Cedar Swamp. The river that flows through the Assonet Cedar Swamp is shown as the Assonet River on the 1831 map of the area, the name Cedar Swamp River does not appear until an 1879 map. The Cedar Swamp River is the Assonet River. The perennial stream that crosses the rail line approximately four tenths of a mile south of Malbone Street is Peirce Brook. I have other issues with wetland resources along both the New Bedford and Fall River lines. An Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation is currently before the Lakeville Conservation Commission; these issues will be addressed there.</p>	<p>Updated figures provided in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR utilize geographic names provided by MassGIS.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-069.07	Linda Grubb	<p>In conclusion, it is my belief that the re-establishment of commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River will have far greater impacts on the Town of Lakeville, its citizens and its natural resources than the DEIS/DEIR indicates. Those impacts will extend well beyond the footprint of the rail lines. I support public transportation and the South Coast Rail Project. I believe this project can be built in a way that will protect the natural and cultural resources of Lakeville. I don't believe we need to choose between the two. I want to believe we can do both.</p>	<p>USACE disagrees with the comment that the impacts of the project are greater than disclosed in the DEIS/DEIR. The impact analyses and associated mitigation measures have been further developed for this FEIS/FEIR.</p>
E-032.01	Wendy Hanawalt	<p>I've been an Easton resident for over 20 years. I just wanted to add my voice to the comments about the proposed South Coast Rail planned to go through Easton. You probably don't hear a lot of these comments, but I'd just like to say that I'm IN FAVOR of the rail line.</p> <p>I live fairly close to where the train will run through town. While I certainly can appreciate the concerns of the residents near the line and hope that you do whatever is possible to mitigate their concerns, I think quick and easy access to Boston by public transportation is absolutely crucial, for a number of reasons. For one, it decreases our dependency on gas and eases the traffic on our highways. But, from a selfish point of view, it dramatically increases the ability of working people to seek employment where it exists: in the metropolitan Boston area. I, for one, welcome the opportunity to seek employment in Boston without having to worry about the expense, time, and trouble of commuting by automobile. While I appreciate people's concern about the historic value of Easton's downtown buildings, I think we have to look forward, not backward, when contemplating such projects.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-013.01	David Hardy	<p>I struggle with digesting all the materials in the 2,500 page document (like the Federal Budget). and am requesting a delay so residents such as me and my wife can more fully understand the implications and issues.</p> <p>Given that the DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, I and my family respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days. A total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is simply not sufficient time to digest this document and provide meaningful comments.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-008.01	Candace Heald	<p>I am writing to comment on the South Coast Rail Draft Environment Impact Report. I read the Executive Summary disseminated from February 2011 with great interest. From my reading, the electric train in the Stoughton pathway seems the clear alternative for environmental impact, population served with the least disruption to domestic and business pursuits.</p> <p>I live in Mattapoisett and there is this story about Oliver Wendell Holmes, a great jurist and summer resident of the town. It was said that he left his home at 9:00 am, travelled by the "Dude Special" - a train to Boston and ended up at his office in Cambridge by 11:00 am. He started back at 3:00 to repeat the process and was home by 500 pm. So, in the late 19th century, it was possible to accomplish a feat that is no longer possible -either by using rail technology, or by the clock with summer traffic.</p> <p>The railroad linkages and the local electric train formed the backbone of the southern coastal communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries after the age of sail. The local school for advance students closed in 1901 because the electric cars had come to the village and those students were now able to attend the newly built Fairhaven High School - it was an economy of scale and size no longer possible. Local residents took the rail from Marion and Mattapoisett to come into New Bedford to shop and have lunch -again, a connection no longer possible by public transport with the time and directionality of the busses.</p> <p>The linkages promoted between residents, commerce and cities of all sizes has been fractured over time. We have not seen progress, but regression. The South Coast Rail Project offers a chance to move forward in a climate of environmental concern and economic pressure with the rising prices of fossil fuels.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-030.01	Gilbert Heino	<p>First of all I must be up front and state that our home is right on the rail line and probably the worst location of any home in Easton. We are only feet from the line and the crossing is also only feet from our property on Elm Street, so the bells and whistles would be very detrimental to our environment.</p> <p>You may think that the location of our property is the primary reason that we are opposing the rail, but it is not. Easton is a very small community and the rail will change the entire atmosphere of our town. I am getting to an age where I probably will never see the completion of the line, so my biggest concern is for future generations, generations who will never experience a small historic town because a massive commuter rail will be bisecting the town and polluting our air with diesel fuel exhaust. The impact to the Hockomock Swamp, a major source of water, could be severely compromised with a fuel spillage.</p> <p>I realize that decisions of this kind are somewhat political instead of what is best for the environment or for the citizens, and it saddens me to say that.</p> <p>I have faith that the Army Corps of Engineers will base their decision on the facts and will give great consideration to a small historic community that will forever be changed by a commuter rail speeding through our small rural town.</p>	<p>Noise impacts were evaluated (see Chapter 4.6) and mitigation measures incorporated into the project. In areas where a noise wall would not be feasible, building sound insulation would be installed to address remaining residences qualifying as "severe impacts" under FTA criteria.</p> <p>Water resource impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.17, air quality impacts in Chapter 4.9.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-005.01	Jim Herbert	I am writing to you for any maps or information about the South Coast Rail going by my home at 156 Plain St. Taunton Mass. 02780. There are currently two tracks behind my house. Is that going to stay the same, is there going to be any sound proof walls put up etc.!! I cant make the dates of the two meetings, so any info you can provide me will be greatly appreciated. Also a station is proposed not far from my home is this going to impact our area on Plain St.	<p>A third track would be constructed in the vicinity of the Taunton Depot Station.</p> <p>The Taunton Depot Station would not impact your property because it would be located on the opposite side of the tracks.</p> <p>Noise barriers were considered for areas in Taunton, including your neighborhood. However, they were not found to be cost effective. Therefore, MassDOT will provide building sound insulation at your property to mitigate noise impacts (See Chapter 4.6). Vibration mitigation measures will also be installed on the tracks in the vicinity of your property, see Figure 4.6-6g.</p>
E-069.01	Alan Johnson	I live in the town of Acushnet and I am strongly opposed to the southcoast rail project. The idea of creating a railroad through protected areas is not what should be done. The cost is not something the tax payers should be burdened with at this time. The idea that the railroad would be turned over to the one of the biggest on going deficit bodies in the commonwealth, (MBTA) is even worse. Please do not build or continue this project.	<p>Impacts to protected lands were considered by USACE in evaluating the project (see Chapter 4.10- Open Space).</p> <p>The cost of the alternatives was also considered by USACE (Section 3.2.18).</p> <p>The project sponsor is MassDOT. USACE is reviewing the project due to required federal permits.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-094.01	Michael Jolliffe	<p>I am enclosing comments on the Draft EIS and EIP on the South Coast Rail project proposed by Mass DOT presented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - New England Division dated February 2011. I have been interested in this project for several years and believe its implementation is of critical importance to the welfare of this area. As a civil engineer, I consider my overall experience and a close relationship with planners who have extensive experience with high-speed rail in Europe justifies the comments and observations and ideas I attempt to convey in the documents I am enclosing with this letter.</p> <p>I support the Stoughton Electric approach, which is a good beginning to the access we need, assuming the terminus-to-terminus speed can be significantly improved. As conveyed in my comments, there are opportunities that exist which can be simply and economically applied and lead to very favorable environmental outcomes. These are not only for the fauna and flora that occupy the earth but also for the Homo sapiens who travel on its surface and choose to protect it.</p> <p>I am hopeful that the Final EIS/EIR will recognize that refinement of the Draft will advance its value.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-094.02	Michael Jolliffe	<p>I spoke within the 3 minutes that were allowed for each presentation. My comments were focused on the excessive time that the planned passenger train between New Bedford and Boston will consume in its passage. There is no reason why this journey should not occur in considerably less time than the projected 76 minutes for the electric powered locomotion on the Stoughton Corridor, which I and the majority of potential riders favor. It is evident from the analyses based on the choice of diesel or electric traction that the more rapid transport of the electric power will increase ridership despite its relatively slow pace compared to current Global expectations and adoption.</p> <p>In accordance with the experience of my professional associates in Europe and other parts of the Globe, it is evident that one of the deficiencies in the current plans for operation of the Stoughton Line is the number of stations (10) on the passage from origin to destination. We know that each stop on a route, for a train that travels at 100 M.P.H, delays the transit for at least 4 or 5 minutes. This occurs because the train has to slow, drop off and pick up passengers and then accelerate to its permitted speed. The delay of the train is likely to be nine times five minutes or up to 45 minutes for those travelling from one end of the track to the other.</p> <p>There is a way to provide much faster transport that reduces every passenger's travel time. By providing only two primary stops and by</p>	<p>The operating plan presented in Chapter 3 includes skip stop/express service in the peak periods to reduce the number stops and improve travel time.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-048.01	Jane LeBlanc	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Feasibility – it’s unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.</p> <p>Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).</p> <p>Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth’s preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton’s most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.</p> <p>Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.</p> <p>Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.</p>	See response to comment E-063.01.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.</p> <p>The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-051.01	Michael LeBlanc	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Feasibility – it’s unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.</p> <p>Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).</p> <p>Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth’s preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton’s most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.</p> <p>Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.</p> <p>Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.</p>	See response to comment E-063.01.

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		<p>Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.</p> <p>The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.</p>	
E-014.01	Heather and Doug Lewis	We write this email asking for an extension to the current review period for the DEIS on the South Coast Rail. We are residents of Easton and do not believe a total of 63 days (including weekends and holidays) is enough time to read through and examine closely the over 2,500 pages of material. We intend to submit our comments and ask for additional time. Specifically, we ask for an additional 60 days.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
L-072.01	Heather and Doug Lewis	First and foremost, we request that a Supplemental DEIS/DEIR be required prior to the release of the FEIR. After our review of the DEIS/DEIR we still have many questions and feel additional data and corrected data is necessary for the public's review prior to the FEIR.	A supplemental EIS/EIR is not required.
L-072.02	Heather and Doug Lewis	There is a major difference between the Army Corps' project purpose and MassDOT's project purpose. MassDOT is including smart growth in their project purpose and the Army Corps is not. This is a difference which will sway the cost vs. benefit, so we ask that the Army Corps continue to leave the smart growth component out of the equation. Also, we believe the state should be required for public review to include the "costs" of the smart growth component for their data and outline who will be responsible for those costs.	Unable to determine what the commenter is referring to with respect to the cost of smart growth. The focus of the EIS/EIR is environmental issues and the environmental effects of smart growth are addressed in Chapter 5.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-072.03	Heather and Doug Lewis	One major goal of both the Army Corps and MassDOT is to “support economic development” in the cities of New Bedford and Fall River. We ask the Army Corps to require evidence that proves the economies of Lowell and Worcester improved once rail was provided to those communities. We believe this information will highlight the ability or inability of the rail to provide this “economic development.”	Examples of both locations with and without economic development in the vicinity of transit stations could be provided, and neither would prove what the effect of the South Coast Rail project on land use would be. While it is acknowledged that future job growth cannot be predicted with certainty, a rational process was used to estimate these effects for the EIS/EIR that included robust modeling tools and input from the regional planning organizations (See Chapter 5- Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts).
L-072.04	Heather and Doug Lewis	We believe MassDOT continues to grossly underestimate the cost of the South Coast Rail project and ask that the #s be revisited and revised to be accurate and up-to-date. The cost estimate of 1.4 billion for the Stoughton Alternative has been the number for numerous years. Homes and neighborhoods along the Stoughton Alternative were missed in earlier reports when this 1.4 billion amount was determined. The addition of these homes and neighborhoods will directly impact the costs. Inflation and fuel prices have skyrocketed since then and these increases need to be taken into account, #s adjusted and reported correctly up-to date in the upcoming documents.	Updated cost information is provided in Chapter 3 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-072.05	Heather and Doug Lewis	In addition, we believe the ridership numbers continue to be skewed. It appears from the documents that current MBTA riders who will CHANGE their train station once the new stations are open are being counted as NEW riders, when in fact they are not new riders. We would ask that the ridership #s be closely examined and only true NEW riders are included in the estimate, with a separate category for riders changing stations. Not only do we believe the ridership numbers to be skewed, we believe they are overinflated. As a point of reference, the state originally estimated the Greenbush line to be 4,200 riders. In a recently published article from the Boston Globe, the ridership after three years is averaging 2,100 riders or 50% projection; and the numbers are declining. We have every reason to believe the state is overinflating the ridership numbers on the Stoughton Alternative, as well.	The ridership information was not skewed. Detailed information regarding the ridership projections, including changes in existing commuter line ridership, is provided in Appendix 4.1-H. It is true that some riders would switch stations/commuter rail lines. For example, Middleboro inbound boardings would decrease by 200 and Attleboro inbound boardings would decrease by 950 under the Stoughton Electric Alternative. Together, these shifts represent about 18 percent of the total increase in inbound boardings on the Stoughton line (6,250). The remainder of the ridership would be shifts from private auto and bus, as well as new trips made as a result of the availability of rail service.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-072.06	Heather and Doug Lewis	Lastly, we would ask that a more specific funding plan be in place prior to the publication of the next document. It seems irresponsible to proceed so far down the path of this project without a specific funding plan, one which apparently will rely heavily on being subsidized by taxpayers.	Funding issues are outside the scope of the EIS/EIR. As of this date, the project is neither funded, nor sponsored, by a federal agency.
L-072.07	Heather and Doug Lewis	In order to complete this project a special permit will be required. This permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, would allow the state to “discharge fill materials into waters of the United States, including adjacent wetlands.” It is our understanding that what the state wants to do in order to complete this project is not allowable by law therefore this special permit is required. It seems that a law is in place to protect our waters, why would we break the law?	USACE will make a decision on the Section 404 permit application from MassDOT, taking into account the information gained from the environmental review process and associated public comments.
L-072.08	Heather and Doug Lewis	We question how the Army Corps can consider allowing the Hockomock Swamp, an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, to be bisected by a train? We ask the Army Corps to provide specific justification as to how this project is permissible.	Hockomock Swamp was originally bisected by the existing railroad grade, which was built in ca. 1863-66, and it remains so today. A permitting decision has not been made. The applicant (MassDOT) has incorporated numerous mitigation measures, including a trestle to minimize fragmentation and wetland impacts within the Hockomock swamp.
L-072.09	Heather and Doug Lewis	In addition, we would ask that further review be given to protecting the safety of town’s drinking water supplies along the Stoughton Alternative. Portions of Raynham and Bridgewater’s drinking water are from the Hockomock Swamp. As well, the train will run within 400’ of Easton’s most productive drinking well. We are concerned about direct and indirect impacts to drinking water supplies both during construction and operation.	Water resource impacts were addressed in Chapter 4.17. Only the Whittenton Alternative alignment is located within 400’ of an existing Zone 1 drinking water supply. No impacts to the Easton Drinking Water supply are expected.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-072.10	Heather and Doug Lewis	We would like further review to be given to safety both during construction and operation to families who live directly beside the rail line. First, we found it challenging to locate safety information in the DEIS/DEIR and second, we are not satisfied with some of the answers we struggled to find. It came to our attention that during construction and once the train is up and operational there is no commitment made in the DEIS/DEIR to provide fencing between properties beside the railbed and the train. We do not understand this complete disregard and lack of commitment for safety and ask the Corps to consider this and consider the need for mitigation for this added safety.	A commitment to fence the right-of-way in residential areas is included in Chapter 7 of the FEIS/FEIR.
L-072.11	Heather and Doug Lewis	<p>We have been unable to determine how fast the train will travel behind Kennedy Circle and would like the Corps to require MassDOT to provide an answer. Specifically what is the speed while traveling south and then north, as well? The speed of the train directly relates to the noise and vibration impacts to homes and without this clear data we cannot be sure the state is correctly showing which homes along Kennedy Circle will be impacted, to what degree homes will be impacted and what types of mitigation would be expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We ask for further review about vibration impacts to homes along the railbed in Easton. From the Volume II figures almost no homes are listed as impacted by vibration, homes within feet of the railbed! How can this be?</li> </ul>	Figure 4.6-6e, Noise Impacts and Mitigation and Vibration Mitigation Stoughton Line, Tile 1 depicts noise and vibration impacts and mitigation measures at and near Kennedy Circle in Easton. The train would be travelling at maximum speed (100 mph for electric locomotives) in this area, as indicated by the yellow lines that show the wider noise propagation area than at adjoining areas with narrower propagation areas depicted. The increased noise level that would be experienced by the commenter would depend upon their specific location on Kennedy Circle. Vibration mitigation measures would be added to the track in this segment, in the locations depicted in the figure. This segment does not qualify for noise walls, but severely impacted receptors would qualify for building insulation to mitigate increased noise levels.
L-072.12	Heather and Doug Lewis	We would like further clarification on the MBTA's Right of Way. Specifically, we would like to have the accurate widths of the Right of Way listed. We learned that the width ranges from 40' – 80', with the majority being 60'. We would like further review of the exact widths and further data reported in the upcoming documents. As well, we would like further information provided on the locations of the "staging areas" for equipment and materials used during the construction process.	<p>The width of the right-of-way varies over the length of the alignment, and is depicted in figures in Volume II of the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>Construction staging information is provided in the Construction Staging Memo, Appendix 3.2-F.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-072.13	Heather and Doug Lewis	<p>We would like further review and disclosure on the water flow that can be found at different times of the year on the stretch of abandoned railbed between Purchase Street and Prospect Street in Easton. We learned that when the original freight trains ran along this abandoned railbed, the train tracks were elevated in the center with a ditch on either side to collect the run off and then the water would travel to the nearest wetlands or body of water. We understand that MassDOT believes that over time those ditches have filled in and therefore water is flowing over where the tracks were originally and not in the ditches. The plan is when the ditches are rebuilt that they will once again function as years ago. We would submit to you, as we have in the past, that yes, substantial water flow (measuring up to 10" deep and moving steadily south) along where the old tracks were originally exists today. However, the difference we see on the Right of Way is that the ditches may have filled in slightly, but there are still deep ditches and when the water is flowing over the old area of tracks the ditches are filled with standing water. We would ask the Corps to continue to review this concern since what we see on the Right of Way is different than what MassDOT believes is occurring. Specifically, our concerns are what will happen to this water flow along the abandoned tracks and this sitting water in the ditches during construction and operation</p>	<p>These type of details would be addressed in the final design of the stormwater management system for the project. The direction of flow along the track at the south end of Hockomock is to the north, not south as the commenter states.</p>
L-072.14	Heather and Doug Lewis	<p>We would like further review and clarification on certain figures in Volume II. We will use the figures 4.6-7b through 4.6-7d as examples. The yellow line showing Electric Severe Impact and Electric Impact change in width throughout these figures and we would request an answer as to why the width changes? What factors create the differences?</p>	<p>The figures referred to by the comment depict noise impacts. The distance noise impacts extend from the alignment varies based on the FTA methodology. For example, changes in train speed. Another factor in the FTA methodology for determining impacts is the estimated or measured existing conditions noise level in each area of sensitive receptors. Therefore, even in areas where the speed is the same, the extent of noise impacts can vary if two different neighborhoods have different existing conditions noise levels. See Chapter 4.6 of the FEIS/FEIR for a summary of the FTA methodology for determining noise impacts.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-072.15	Heather and Doug Lewis	We would also like additional review and clarification about double tracking between the station in North Easton and Taunton. At a public meeting with MassDOT we were told double tracking would end just south of that North Easton Station. In the DEIS/DEIR (4.4-40) it states "New FRA Class 5 single or double track would be placed on the out-of-service railbed from the Stoughton Station to Winter Street in Taunton.". We would like further review of this and clarification of exact locations of any areas for doubling tracking in this stretch.	Double tracking is proposed where necessary for the operation of this project, see Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8
L-072.16	Heather and Doug Lewis	We have worked diligently to be informed citizens and participate in the public review process. We have listed above many specific concerns in regards to our own neighborhood and town. We have also outlined our overriding project concerns. We would like the Army Corps to address both categories of our concerns. We will reiterate our concern about the entire premise of this project and the exorbitant cost for the return on investment. We do not believe the Army Corps is justified in permitting this project via the Stoughton alternative under the Clean Water Act. If a transportation system is to be considered we continue to believe that the Rapid Bus Alternative should be determined to be the LEDPA.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
L-036.01	Forrest Lindwall	And as a native of Taunton and a Transportation Engineering Consultant for the past forty years I believe that this project offers tremendous opportunity for the economic revitalization of the cities of Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford as well as establishing a model for "Smart Growth" throughout the south coast region.	Thank you for your comment.
L-036.02	Forrest Lindwall	With respect to the alternatives analysis presented in the draft EISEIR, it is quite evident to me that the extension of the line through Stoughton is the most appropriate alternative and offers the greatest potential for Smart Growth along its corridor and therefore I support the implementation of extending the Stoughton line subject to further refinement of it's physical, socio-economic and environmental impacts in the design phase.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-036.03	Forrest Lindwall	<p>With respect to the station design, it is obvious that it is a minimalist approach that offers no improvement over the present station. Parking is scattered about in five (5) separate surface lots owned by the T with more than 70% of the spaces extending 125 feet to 980 feet from the northerly end of the proposed platform. Clearly, the occupation of several acres of prime downtown Stoughton real estate by five separate surface lots with up to 50% of the spaces being a much further walk than desirable is not a formula that will promote Smart Growth.</p> <p>It would also appear that when a train is stopped in the station, the Wyman Street crossing gates would be down, thereby perpetuating a major source of traffic congestion in downtown Stoughton during commuting hours. Further, there are no apparent accessibility accommodations for the Outbound line. In summary, the Stoughton Station design as presented fails to address several previous comments offered by Stoughton residents to the project designers at public meetings and offers no apparent impetus for Smart Growth.</p>	<p>The Stoughton Station has been redesigned for the FEIS/FEIR, see Chapter 3. Several alternative options were considered.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-036.04	Forrest Lindwall	<p>As for electrification of the line, although enticing from a long term cost/environmental benefit, its negative impact on community aesthetics and public safety far outweigh those benefits, Obviously, major segments of the line traverse dense residential and commercial/retail centers through Canton, Stoughton, North Easton and on to the larger cities in the south coast. The erection of overhead stations, electrical wires and safety fencing along the right of way will create a substantial negative aesthetic that will decrease adjacent property values and introduce an industrial presence throughout the entire corridor.</p> <p>As for public safety, the MBTA's tack record in maintaining its facilities, such as security fencing along its right-of-ways, is essentially non-existent and the location of the stantions along miles of residential neighborhoods and several schoolyards is a very tempting invitation for the young to climb and explore. It simply is not a prudent alternative to the use of diesel powered trains.</p> <p>In closing, I would reiterate my support for the South Coast Rail Project's Stoughton Alternative and strongly suggest that 1) the design of the Stoughton Station needs to be re-visited with more community input and 2) that the electrification of the line be omitted from further consideration.</p>	<p>The visual impacts of electrification are addressed in Chapter 4.5. Potential property value impacts cannot be reasonably predicted, but are discussed generally in Chapter 4.3.</p> <p>The right-of-way would be appropriately fenced for public safety.</p>
E-042.01	Patti Linhares	<p>Where as I do see the need for the railroad to progress, I am very leery of the fact it will be coming through my back yard. The tracks are literally 10 feet from behind my garage. I understand that concessions will be made like sound proof walls and or new windows would be supplied for me to keep my house sound proof from all the noise and that's wonderful, in the winter. But what happens in the summer when after a long day at work and my family and I would like to relax on our deck .How do you cut that noise off??? How can we enjoy the outdoors with trains going by all the time.</p>	<p>Where cost effective, noise walls would reduce outdoor noise levels (see Chapter 4.6 for a list of locations where noise walls are proposed and shown on the Chapter 4.6 figures in Volume II). The commenter is correct that outdoor noise would not be mitigated in areas where building sound insulation is the proposed mitigation measure.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-042.02	Patti Linhares	I would be more that willing to sell my properties to the state. Would that ever be an option? What kind of value will my property hold with a train constantly going by. It's bad enough property values have plunged of late. What will this do. There has got to be a way you can help us out here. Would you like to live like that? I truly doubt it!	No property acquisitions are proposed as mitigation for noise impacts.
E-060.01	Leon Litchfield	I am writing to express my strong opposition to extending the commuter rail to New Bedford/Fall River using the Stoughton alternative. I am opposed to this for the following reasons:  1. Safety - as a resident of Easton, I feel that the rail line will significantly impact the traffic flow in a section of town that is already very congested. Trains crossings at road level will snarl traffic and create traffic hazards.	Impacts related to grade crossings, including safety and traffic delay, are addressed in Chapter 4.1.
E-060.02	Leon Litchfield	2. Environmental - despite the finding that this alternative will cause the least harm environmentally, I feel that it will cause irreparable damage to the environment. This is especially true with respect to endangered (as well as other wildlife) in the Hockomock Swamp. I am also concerned that there will be negative effects on the water supply within the town of Easton, a town with water that has always been rated among the best in the Commonwealth.	The environmental issues cited in the comment were addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.
E-060.03	Leon Litchfield	3. Cost - if anything was learned from the Big Dig fiasco, it was that cost estimates escalate considerably. From the first time that this project was discussed, it has escalated a great deal. The current cost estimate that is rapidly approaching two billion dollars is not cost effective for the number of people that are estimated to use this commuter rail extension.	Cost effectiveness (cost per rider) information is provided in Chapter 3. The cost should be considered over the long life of the infrastructure investment (30+ years).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-060.04	Leon Litchfield	4. Anti-Family - Finally, and most importantly, it does not make sense to me that this amount of money would be used to transport individuals away from their families for several hours per day. When considering the time that would be needed to travel to and from commuter rail stations, take the train, and travel to a job location, it is not unreasonable to estimate that employees would spend two hours or more each way (or 4+ hours round-trip) to work in Boston.	The build alternatives would reduce the travel time to Boston in comparison to other modes.
E-060.05	Leon Litchfield	While the funds (both state and federal) that are earmarked for this project are probably set aside for transportation purposes only, it would make a great deal more sense to use even half of what it will cost to extend this rail line as incentives and support for businesses in the New Bedford/Fall River area. If funding was used to encourage businesses to develop and provide jobs in these towns, employees would be able to not only make a living but to spend time with their families and friends.	A non-transportation economic development strategy would not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore was not studied in the EIS/EIR.
E-049.01	Antoinette Lopes	I read the sections of the Environmental Impact Statement comparing the different options and the estimates of ridership. I think it's clear that there is only one sensible option which is the Stoughton Electric option. But in my opinion, and I'm just a person (I haven't done any studies), the ridership was lower than I expected. I understand that there are formulas that they use to come up with these numbers. I gather that they use the numbers of people who already commute to Boston on a daily basis. That makes sense. It's called Commuter Rail. But what I'd like to add to the argument is really not about commuters. It's about normal folks who rarely if ever go to Boston, who I believe would if there was a train available to them whatever it's called.	The transportation modeling for the project (conducted by CTPS for MassDOT) did consider the attractiveness of the service to people who do not commute to Boston on a daily basis, such as trips for shopping or access to medical facilities. The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region, and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20.)

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-049.02	Antoinette Lopes	<p>This leads me to the hidden benefit I believe the South Coast Rail could really bring to New Bedford. And that is the promise of a new day. Proof that it isn't true that they are powerless. The believe that there is a world out there and they are part of it. That there are still possibilities for everyone, young and old.</p> <p>That requires movement. That requires cultural exchange. That requires going places and doing things that you haven't before. I believe a train is essential for this. We have buses. I take the Dattco bus up to Boston when I can. But I can't do it often. It's twenty four dollars round trip. After that I don't have a lot to spend so I just basically go to get out of here for the day. It's inconvenient. The schedule doesn't allow for any sort of night out in Boston. If concerts and shows start at eight o'clock, a last bus leaving promptly at nine does little for you. So you only have the possibility of a matinee. Limited again. As for those who have the ability to drive up, they don't, except for on the rare occasion. It's too much of a hassle and an expense (gas/parking). Boston might as well be outer space. And most of those people would cut off their right arm before they'd leave their beloved automobile in a park and ride to take a (*gasp*) bus!</p> <p>I know. I know. This is commuter rail. The trains probably won't come back to New Bedford later than the buses do now or maybe not even that late and not on the weekend. I get it. But my hope and my belief is that the commuter service would be the beginning. The beginning of a door opening wide. Once the train is there, once people, more people than are estimated, take it on a regular basis, I believe it will show that people want to go back and forth between our two cities and eventually that will bring more service. And not only will it allow people to go to Boston when they like, without the burden of inflated gas prices or inflated bus fares based on gas prices, but it will also allow tourists from around the world the ability to come here. New Bedford is and always has been tourist ready. It's just a matter of getting them here. A direct connection to and from</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Economic revitalization and smart growth were among the potential project benefits considered by USACE in the EIS/EIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		Boston will entice train-friendly Europeans and other world travelers to stop by and say 'Hi!'. The new beginning that the rail would provide would fertilize the work that has already been done to make the Whaling City a tourist friendly place.	
E-054.01	John Malley	Hi, my name is John Malley and I am a resident of Stoughton, MA, and I do not live near the railroad tracks. However, I want to express my opposition to the proposal for an increase in rail service though Stoughton, to New Bedford.	Thank you for your comment.
E-054.02	John Malley	First, the increase in rail traffic would be a serious detriment to the town, which is essentially split in half by the rail line. The line would need to be double tracked along the entire route through the town and there would be high-speed trains on the tracks. The line runs near the O'Donnell Middle School and is along the walking route for students going to the middle and high schools. The increased traffic and speed along the line will create a hazard to the children going to and from the schools.	The rail line is separated from the school property by commercial/industrial properties, and by Cushing Street. The portions of the right-of-way in developed areas would be fenced and appropriate safety features (gates, warning bells etc.) would be used at grade crossings. Therefore, a hazard to children going to school would not be created.
E-054.03	John Malley	<p>Second, with the addition of the second track and given the fact the rail will end at a port, the line will also become a significant freight line, hauling stuff from New Bedford all the way through to Readville.</p> <p>Stoughton and towns along the South Coast Route would see 24/7 train traffic (not just commuter rail service) along a densely populated route, where houses and businesses are located near, and in some cases on the old railbed.</p> <p>I believe the State has significantly over-estimate the potential use of the commuter line and underplayed what is going to be a more significant impact, which is the addition of a significant amount of freight traffic from the New Bedford port.</p>	Freight services is anticipated to continue on the track segments where freight is currently provided (on the Stoughton Line north of Stoughton Station, on the Attleboro Secondary, on the Stoughton Line in Taunton between Longmeadow Road and Weir Junction, and on the New Bedford Main Line and Fall River Secondary south of Weir Junction). No future freight service is currently planned or anticipated on the currently out-of-service Whittenton Branch or Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-054.04	John Malley	Please rethink this plan and at the absolute least, provide mitigation in the form of underground tracks from Central Street in Stoughton through to at least the Stoughton/Easton line.	No impacts warranting the high cost of rail tunnels were identified in Stoughton. Measures such as building sound insulation would be more cost effective in addressing severe noise impacts.
L-073.01	John Malloy	I am concerned and have been since the outset regarding the cost and efficacy of the project -The Stoughton Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.
L-073.02	John Malloy	What I learned while working for the Boston based hospital and later as the agency head of an agency located and providing services to communities in southeastern MA was that the folks living in the southeastern MA area do not "think" Boston for employment, medical, recreational, sports or entertainment needs. They "think" Providence because it is closer. That has not changed and extending the railroad to that area is a very expensive, nearly two billion dollar effort, will not change the culture of thinking anytime soon.	The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region (as measured by surveys), and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20.) The modeling takes into account trips to/from Providence as well, not only Boston.
L-073.03	John Malloy	<p>I seriously challenge the validity of the ridership projections for the project. Moreover, particularly at this time when every dollar spent needs to be carefully evaluated so as to have the greatest impact on the economy, the cost of the project could be more prudently spent in Fall River and New Bedford to improve the economy by bringing jobs to the area and by improving the area's regional transportation infrastructure.</p> <p>There is already existing bus service from Fall River and New Bedford to Boston. If the current demand for more of the existing transportation service were evident by a steadily increasing ridership that would suggest evidence for a greater consideration in revisiting the transportation needs of Fall River and New Bedford. But that is not the case.</p>	<p>The project purpose includes transportation elements that would not be addressed by economic development spending as an alternative to commuter rail service, see Chapter 2.</p> <p>The existing bus service is subject to the same highway congestion as general auto traffic and thus is not representative of the existing or future demand for the faster service provided by commuter rail.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-050.01	Trent Maltby	I wanted to write to you to let you know of my opposition to the South Coast Rail Project. I live in Easton and know that this debacle will have a truly detrimental effect on our town and the other towns along the route. However, my main objection comes as a Massachusetts tax payer. Regardless of which route is chosen, this project makes absolutely no financial sense and this is going to be the South Coast's "Big Dig." Based upon the current estimate of \$2 billion (which will obviously grow), I cannot understand how this is still being considered given the miniscule number of passengers who will take the trip from New Bedford all the way to Boston. The special interests and politicians in New Bedford/Fall River seem to have done an exceptional job lobbying because no one seems to be looking at the basic facts. It's too expensive and we simply don't have the funds given the current economy. The MBTA is currently running in a deficit. Please tell me how it will be able to build this line and also maintain it's current lines, when it's unable to do so now. This seems to be Beacon Hill politics at it's worst and I hope that, somehow, this disaster never comes to fruition.	Funding issues are outside the scope of the EIS/EIR.
F-003.01	S. Martin	I'm trying to submit comments regarding the South Coast Rail Project but I am unable to email the contact person indicated on the website.	The Corps contacted the commenter via e-mail on May 17, 2011 and provided the requested MEPA office contact information.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-043.01	Eileen Marum	<p>I support enthusiastically an electric railroad travelling through the Stoughton route and the Hockomock Swamp.</p> <p>Introduction The Hockomock Swamp, contained within parts of Bridgewater, Easton, Norton, Raynham, Taunton, and West Bridgewater, is not as pristine an area as some opponents of the train might have you believe. Although the swamp acts as a natural flood control mechanism for much of the northern part of southeastern Massachusetts, it is crossed by a number of roads--including heavily travelled Route 24 and Route 138--as well as an old railroad bed. Dirt bikes also frequently use trails within the swamp.</p> <p>The proximity of Routes 24 and 138 and Interstate 495 to the Hockomock swamp and their associated wetlands and water bodies is a direct and imminent threat to these resources and their environmental values. Toxic runoff from these roadways [gasoline, oil, and antifreeze, brake fluid, salt and sand] percolate through the soil and find their way into groundwater and household wells threatening the quality and overall viability of these water resources. I agree that maintaining high water quality is important not only to preserving the surface and groundwater system as a source of public drinking water, but also for sustaining the interdependence of vegetation, wildlife and water resources. For these reasons, road traffic on Route 24 and 138 and Interstate 495 should be reduced and train service established.</p> <p>Regional growth trends indicate that residential, commercial and industrial development will continue, and will be located in proximity to major transportation routes. Rail service would mitigate the detrimental effect from the incessant highway noise on those people who live in close proximity to the major highways--route 24, 138 and Interstate 495. Rail service would decrease the number of motorcycle crashes, auto crashes, truck crashes, and wildlife crashes, and save lives, property, and the cost of insurance. Southeastern</p>	<p>While the project would reduce auto travel in comparison to the No-Build condition, it would not reduce it to an extent that would substantially affect runoff from highways or traffic noise as suggested by the comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		Massachusetts needs an intelligent transportation system that incorporates a quick efficient rail system.	
L-043.02	Eileen Marum	<p>Expansion of transportation capacity in the South Coast region with the existing transit services (bus, taxis, park-and-ride and vanpool) is limited as they use the same roadway system and are thus subject to the same roadway congestion. Transportation system solutions based on highway improvements are limited due to policy considerations and constraints imposed by the physical conditions of the South Coast area, where such highway improvements would need to be implemented to be effective in addressing capacity and congestion issues. However, while highway expansion and utilization of existing transportation services do not provide long-term solutions to the transportation problems, public transit connections--in terms of travel time, service frequency, capacity and geographic availability—does provide opportunities to improve transportation between New Bedford/Fall River and Boston and between the South Coast cities of New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton.</p>	The issues raised in the comment were considered in the alternatives analysis process discussed in Chapter 3.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-043.03	Eileen Marum	<p>Both Route 128 and the Southeast Expressway are heavily congested roadways, particularly during peak periods. Traffic volumes on Route 128 are approximately 135,000 vehicles per day north of Route 24 (towards 1-95) and 167,000 vehicles per day to the south (towards 1-93/Route 3). Traffic volumes on 1-93/Route 3 are as high as approximately 191,000 vehicles per day. On Route 24, the major north south corridor in the South Coast region, the average daily traffic ranges from 26,700 vehicles per day in Fall River to over 115,000 vehicles per day in Randolph. Traffic congestion and long delays are common on the northern segments of this highway during weekday peak commuting periods.</p> <p>As the population in the South Coast region and employment in the Boston area have grown, the demands on the roadway system linking Southeastern Massachusetts to the rest of the region have increased. Traffic volumes on the limited-access state routes linking the South Coast region to the employment centers of Boston have been growing over the past decade.</p>	Information on travel demand and congestion was considered, see Chapters 2 and 4.1.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-043.04	Eileen Marum	<p>Generally, traffic volumes on the roadways in the South Coast region have grown at an annual rate of two to three percent over the past decade. The largest increases in traffic volumes have been on Route 24 in Raynham and Taunton, where traffic volumes increased 4.1 percent in Raynham and 5.0 percent in Taunton. Traffic volumes on Route 140 in Taunton increased at an annual rate of 2.2 percent. Route 128 and I-93, the Southeast Expressway, exhibited fairly stable traffic volumes, considering they are some of the most congested highways in the state and traffic volumes on these roadways are at or near capacity for long portions of the day. Moreover, these roadways have limited capacity for further increases in average daily traffic volumes leading to further congestion with continued population growth.</p> <p>The increases in traffic volumes on the principal highways linking the South Coast region to downtown Boston have led to a deteriorating level of service on these roadways, especially during peak periods. Delays on these roadways are now common and have become worse over the past decade, particularly, on Route 24 as it approaches Route 128/I-93 in Randolph.</p> <p>Increases to peak-hour volumes of up to 3,500 and 4,000 vehicles per hour on Route 24 and on I-93/Route 128 in Braintree and in Randolph, respectively, have led to deterioration of Level of Service on these major roadways, which are intended to relieve the local roadways from regional traffic. Several mitigation measures have been implemented on I-93 to reduce congestion (high-occupancy vehicle lanes, improved MBTA Red Line service, and Old Colony Commuter Rail service). However, this highway continues to operate at poor levels of service, resulting in substantial congestion and decreased safety. There are no roadway alternatives to the use of Route 24 and I-93, and to my knowledge no mitigation measures are planned to reduce congestion.</p> <p>The lack of adequate capacity of the roadway system and the</p>	Information on travel demand and congestion was considered, see Chapters 2 and 4.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>resultant reduction in level of service is anticipated to become even more problematic with the increased demand for transportation resulting from the growth of the South Coast region as commuters living near Boston are moving away to areas further from the metropolitan core. Southeastern Massachusetts has been one of the fastest growing areas in the Commonwealth. Between 1960 and 2000, this area experienced a growth rate of 31 percent. Between 1960 and 1990, this area had an annual growth of over 2,500 people per year from a base population of 343,353 to its 1990 population of 430,846. Growth slowed somewhat between 1990 and 2000, to an annual growth of approximately 1,950 people per year. These figures translate to a growth of 4.5 percent between 1990 and 2000. For every 10,000 new residents moving into the area, it is expected 3,500 new residential units will be needed. This influx is predicted to generate 27,650 new vehicle trips per day. This will further degrade the level of service provided by the regional transportation system connecting the South Coast region to Boston resulting in a concomitant increase in congestion, accidents, travel time and air pollution; not only on the highways themselves but potentially also on nearby local roadways that may absorb the traffic spillover from nearby congested highways.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-043.05	Eileen Marum	<p>Motor vehicles predominant sources of ozone precursor emissions</p> <p>Motor vehicles are the predominant sources of ozone precursor emissions within the South Coast region, which has been classified as a Severe Non-Attainment Area for ozone. In other words, the region does not meet one or more of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for the ozone, one of the criteria pollutants designated in the Clean Air Act. Automobiles also emit carbon monoxide through the partial combustion of carbon-containing compounds in gasoline. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles and fuels should be a priority for the Commonwealth. These emissions can be reduced through several initiatives: (1) promote public transit, (2) multi-modal systems and (3) transit oriented development [smart growth].</p> <p>Air Quality</p> <p>The highways serving the South Coast region convey high volumes of automobile traffic, and have high levels of congestion both of which increases vehicle emissions. Transportation alternatives for South Coast commuters that would reduce the mobile-source emissions of greenhouse gases are limited due to the inadequacy of the transit system. A shift in travel from automobiles to public transit could reduce vehicle emissions and improve regional air quality.</p> <p>Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) measures the extent of motor vehicle operation or the total number of vehicle miles travelled within an area on a given day. It is an important gauge for air quality and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, as emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases are related to the distance traveled by automobiles (and to a lesser degree congestion). Regions with high VMTs per capita have a greater potential for poor air quality and GHG emissions compared to regions with lower VMT per capita. One of the reasons for the relatively high VMT in the South Coast region is the much greater proportion of transportation by car versus rail or bus, as compared to other</p>	Air quality issues are addressed in Chapter 4.9.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		regions.	
L-043.06	Eileen Marum	<p>Southeastern Massachusetts experienced a 4.5 percent population growth between 1990 and 2000. As the affordable housing market has moved further from the Boston metropolitan area, South Coast has become one of the fastest growing areas in the Commonwealth. Many people relocating to the area are retaining their jobs in the Boston market and thus increase the demand for transportation services between the area and Boston as well as within the South Coast region. The number of commuter trips between the South Coast region and Boston was 8,000 in 2000 and is expected to increase by 1,200 to 9,200 in 2030. Most of the commuter trips from the region to the Boston market are in single occupant vehicles and public transit accounts for a minor proportion of work trips in the service area. This trend will continue in absence of improved public transit connections between Boston and the South Coast region.</p>	These trends were discussed in Chapter 2.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-043.07	Elieen Marum	<p>The inadequacy of public transit service in the South Coast region is reflected in several aspects: The availability of public transit service in absolute terms and compared to other regions, especially those that have a large commutation segment to downtown Boston, and the quality of transit service as expressed in travel time and frequency of service, especially during the peak hours. The geographic availability of transit service to people in the region is also relevant in terms of access to employment opportunities and services, including education and healthcare. In addition to transit services between the South Coast region and Boston, transit services within the South Coast region are also relevant. An indicator of quality of transit service is the META's Service Delivery Policy. This policy identifies minimum frequency of service levels that provides the guidelines by which the META maintains accessibility to the transportation network within a reasonable waiting period. For Commuter Rail and Commuter Bus minimum frequencies should provide three trips in a peak direction during the morning and afternoon to evening peak periods.</p> <p>Existing transportation in the South Coast region is predominantly auto-oriented and transit services within the South Coast region are limited to bus and demand-response services operated by regional transit authorities and private carriers. Most of the commuter trips from the South Coast region to the Boston market are in single occupant vehicles and public transit accounts for a minor proportion of work trips in the service area. To a large extent, this can be attributed to the lack of public transit alternatives other than privately-operated bus service. Many communities in the South Coast region lack public transit facilities other than private bus services and major population centers are as much as 25 miles from existing commuter rail stations. All commuter rail stations are located outside the South Coast region and are already nearing capacity. Present modes of transportation include:</p> <p>1. Bus Service</p>	These trends were discussed in Chapter 2.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>Bus service to Boston from the South Coast region including the cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford is limited to private carriers. Private carriers also connect Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton with each other and with Providence, Newport, and points beyond. Bus service from the South Coast region to Boston uses the regional roadway system and is thus subject to the same congestion and safety problems on the highway system as other vehicles, resulting in long and unpredictable travel times. The bus service is also substantially more expensive than MBTA commuter rail services over similar distances, creating an additional constraint on usage of bus service, especially for lower income travelers. Some bus service exists to commuter rail stations outside the South Coast Area; however the transfer between two transit services increases overall travel time, rendering it less attractive. The private express bus service is subject to the same congestion. While the current bus service plays an important role, especially as it is the only regular transit service between the South Coast region and Boston, its use is limited, reflecting constraints related to travel time, service frequency and cost.</p> <p>2. Vanpools/Carpools</p> <p>Vanpools in communities of the South Coast region are provided through MassRides. Although relevant as a complementary service vanpool and carpool travel times are severely impacted by slow travel speeds on the expressway and secondary roads.</p> <p>3. Park-and-Ride</p> <p>Park-and-ride facilities and carpool/vanpool services are offered along the primary regional travel corridors in the South Coast region. Park-and Ride lots are associated with car-pooling, van-pooling or private bus service to Boston. There are nine public park-and-ride lots located in the South Coast region, of which five are located along the primary roadways from the region to the Boston metropolitan area and four not in the immediate vicinity of the primary access routes to Boston. In addition, three private park-and-ride lots</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>in the South Coast region are available exclusively for customers using the private bus services to Boston.</p> <p>4. Commuter Rail</p> <p>No commuter rail service is offered within the South Coast region. The nearest commuter lines (MBTA's Providence Line and Middleborough Lines) terminate northwest and northeast of the South Coast region. More importantly, the three major cities in the South Coast region; Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford are the only cities within 50 miles of Boston that are not served by passenger rail. The closest commuter rail stations to the South Coast region are Middleborough/Lakeville (MBTA Middleborough Line), and Attleboro Station and Providence Station (MBTA Providence Line). The Middleborough Line serves areas east of the South Coast region and southeast of Boston, with stations in Lakeville and Bridgewater, while the Attleboro/Providence and Stoughton lines serve communities to the north and west of the South Coast region. The Attleboro and Mansfield stations are the primary access points on the Attleboro/Providence Line. The Stoughton Station serves as the primary access point on the Stoughton Line. All communities in the heart of the South Coast region are outside a six-mile access radius of these stations, and some - including the major population centers such as New Bedford and Fall River (combined population approximately 182,000) - are more than 20 miles and up to 25 miles from the nearest train station. Due to their distance to the nearest commuter rail station the existing commuter rail lines to Boston are difficult for residents to access. Please see chart below.</p> <p>Travel to these stations is also limited to local secondary roads, which further increases travel time. Moreover, for those commuters in the South Coast region who live closer to commuter rail stations outside the South Coast region, constraints to the usage of the existing stations are posed by station parking and system capacity issues. Commuter rail services are currently approaching capacity and system</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		capacity is limited due to the lack of adequate parking at these stations. Commuter rail parking lots in Attleboro, Mansfield, Stoughton, and on the Middleborough Line are already heavily utilized.	
L-043.08	Eileen Marum	Please send me a copy of the final EIS/EIR	The distribution list for the FEIS/FEIR includes everyone that commented on the DEIS/DEIR.
E-021.01	James Mathes	I offer my strongest possible support for the extension of commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River – specifically, for the South Coast Rail Project. Additionally, when you reach the appropriate point in the process, I urge you to select the so-called Stoughton Route, as it will provide the fastest commuter trip time, and is the most environmentally sound alternative. Further, I hope you will endorse the use of electric trains, as opposed to diesel-powered engines so as to maximize the potential of this new rail service.	Thank you for your comment.
E-021.02	James Mathes	<p>Transportations systems are primary assets that support a community's economy. The cities of New Bedford and Fall River suffer some of the highest unemployment rates in Massachusetts. There are literally tens of thousands of people who are out of work in our region. These are good, hard-working people who want and deserve the same opportunities to access jobs that are currently available to our northern neighbors presently enjoying the benefit of commuter rail service.</p> <p>The potential economic impact of opening access to employment opportunities for our unemployed and under-employed workers is staggering. Each commuter rail car offers the potential to ferry dozens of workers to good-paying jobs, and in return fetch millions of dollars in economic impact by way of the paychecks they bring back to their families and communities. You see, just as nations have measurable "trade balances," so do regions. As such, the exchange of labor for paychecks made possible by commuter rail service will have a dramatic positive impact on our South Coast trade balance.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-021.03	James Mathes	If you want to do something that will help us help ourselves, move this project forward to completion. Do everything you can to facilitate a thorough and speedy process. And, please, don't fall prey to requests to extend deadlines or slow down the process. This project has been in the works for more than twenty years. That's plenty of time for more than enough bites at the apple.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-074.01	Michael Mazzuca	<p>According to MassDOT, the stated purpose of the proposed South Coast Rail Project is:</p> <p>“to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA, and to enhance regional mobility, while supporting smart growth planning and development strategies in the affected communities.”</p> <p>The key phrase in the stated purpose is “meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, MA”, with “demand” being the most important word. Webster’s New World Dictionary defines demand as an urgent requirement. I do not believe there is an urgent requirement for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston, and I found no evidence in the DEIS/DEIR draft that proves there is any actual demand. In fact a referenced paper, CTPS January 28, 2011 Memo “South Coast Rail Work Trips to Boston” suggesting an increase in demand is not included in the DEIS/DEIR draft. I was unable to locate a copy via the internet and my request to the Army Corp of Engineers was not fulfilled.</p> <p>I say there is no demand for the South Coast Rail because I spent quite some time on the South Coast, I lived in Fairhaven, I graduated from UMass Dartmouth, I worked in Fall River and I still have friends who live on the South Coast. Very, very few people would consider commuting from Fall River/New Bedford to Boston, it is just too far and would take too much time. The large city of choice for Fall River/New Bedford is Providence, RI. I have asked my friends and colleagues that currently live on the South Coast what they would do if their work required them to go into Boston every day and they all gave the same response: If they didn’t like the job they would look for another, and if they wanted to stay in the job they would move closer to Boston.</p> <p>I also question the ridership numbers given in the report, I</p>	<p>Refer to response to comments H-022.02 and H-022.03.</p> <p>The CTPS January 28, 2011 Memo “South Coast Rail Work Trips to Boston” is included as Appendix 2.2-A of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>just don't think there will be over 4000 people riding the train daily from the South Coast. What makes me question these numbers is the reported number of riders for the bus alternatives: according to the report 2360 riders will take a bus that uses existing highway lanes, and 2100 will take the bus if an express lane is built. How does an express lane attract fewer riders? I believe the validity of the ridership modeling is questionable at best.</p> <p>After reading most of the report and focusing in on what I think to be the important sections I feel that the Boston based commuter rail should not be extended to Fall River/New Bedford. The information provided in the DEIS/DEIR draft is not enough to justify the multiple-billion-dollar cost of the project and the arguments for the train just do not hold up under scrutiny.</p>	
E-009.01	Gerald McDonald	<p>The DEIS on the South Coast rail is over 2,500 pages, I respectfully request more time to review it and submit comments. Specifically, I would seek an additional 60 days. The time provided is not sufficient to review this document and provide useful comments.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-033.01	Gerald McDonald	<p>I am writing as a concerned citizen of Massachusetts, and Stoughton resident. I find several main flaws in the recent report, in addition to many general concerns on all the SCR options.</p> <p>The first flaw is that it appears the consultants did not review the option that included the elimination of the existing Stoughton Branch, when reviewing the operational feasibility of the of Attleboro option. The request for this review was formerly made in a prior comment period and acknowledged by the Corp. Yet it is not included now. It seems clear that the operation of the Attleboro line would be improved, especially at South Station with the elimination of the existing Stoughton Branch. This omission seems to leave the Corp open for criticism, or worse, at a latter date.</p> <p>The second flaw I am concerned with is the consultant's mitigation of environmental issues only as it related to the normal construction and operation of a commuter rail line. They don't take into consideration accidents that can happen from commuter rail (diesel fuel spills) or freight operations- which we all know will be coming. So what does the MBTA and their consultants say (or do) when 10 carloads of PCB contaminated soils go off the rails and into the Hockomock Swamp and close Easton drinking water wells? Or just two diesel commuter engines. Oh well, we did not model for that.</p> <p>The third flaw is that the report does not appear to address the long-range plans for AMTRAK as we know exist. The MBTA should team with AMTRAK to make the needed improvements to the Northeast Corridor to facilitate this project, and others. With limited dollars available at all government levels, the money should be spent where it has the most impact with the long-range needs and goals in mind.</p> <p>The fourth flaw I feel exists is ridership projections. All options will be shown to steal riders from existing options, rail and bus. Also, I feel that ridership projections in general should be questioned and revamped. The Greenbush line has</p>	<p>Eliminating the existing MBTA service on the Stoughton Line to improve the operation of the Attleboro Alternatives is not a reasonable alternative. This would have unacceptable impacts in terms increased automobile trips and reduced transportation options for populations unable to drive or without access to private vehicles.</p> <p>Freight would continue to operate along segments where it already exists. Therefore, the project would not increase freight accident risks (the risk would remain the same as the existing condition).</p> <p>Amtrak does not have plans for the alignments selected for further analysis in the FEIS/FEIR. Capital improvements are not proposed along the Northeast Corridor as part of this project.</p> <p>The ridership projections have been updated for the FEIS/FEIR, see Chapter 4.1.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		proven, that if you build it, they will not come. It has been operational for over 3 year and suffers from chronically low ridership, and the congestion on Route 3 it was meant to relieve has not changed.	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-033.02	Gerald McDonald	<p>1. Middleborough Alternatives The state must continue to seriously consider the “Middleborough Alternatives”; these options hold a hope of solving other looming transportation problems/opportunities. Specifically the development of a Middleboro casino, the continued development of the former Weymouth Naval Air station and extension of rail services to Cape Cod, all of which should be planned for rail or light rail service.</p> <p>2. Economic Growth In 1990 Governor Weld promised the Fall River/New Bedford area help in the areas of Economic Stimulus and transportation improvements. Unemployment and congestion of Route 24 south of Brockton were the problems. The solution as presented by folks in Boston was a new commuter rail line. I am not sure this is what FR/NB wanted, or needed. It is now 21 years later; their issues have not been solved, and will not be solved by a rail line to Boston. In 1998 several local State Representatives suggested just what they wanted: Route 24 improvements and tax incentives that would bring jobs directly to the area, just what they still need. The true solution is to improve the regional transportation infrastructure and stimulate employment closer to people’s homes.</p> <p>3. Lack of Connectivity This is a huge issue when you consider that funding this project takes funds from others. None of the \$1.4 Billion project cost will help get anybody from Fall River to New Bedford conveniently, or to Providence, or Bridgewater State College, or Waltham. Unless you include a Rapid Bus piece. For the rail options, the per rider construction cost, ride time (over 90 minutes) and ultimate rate subsidy are all ridiculous compared to other alternatives that have been discussed.</p> <p>4. Cost to Build: \$500,000 per rider</p> <p>4. State of MBTA Infrastructure</p>	<p>The Middleborough Alternatives were considered and dismissed for the reasons explained in the Phase I Alternatives analysis report.</p> <p>The cost of the alternatives was considered by USACE (Section 3.2.18). Cost per rider information for the alternatives is presented in Table 3.3-6.</p> <p>Policy decisions regarding economic development and how much of transportation funding resources should be dedicated to existing facilities vs. new projects are outside the scope of this EIS/EIR which evaluates the South Coast Rail Project as proposed by MassDOT.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		It would appear based on the MBTA's own reports and news stories that the EOT should focus on "fixing it first" as proposed by Gov. Romney in March 1995. This state of disrepair and operational failures, poor management of contracts just screams for the state to slow down and rethink this project.	



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-091.01	Lynn McSweeney	<p>I have been living in Stoughton since 1983. I am submitting this letter to express my strong opposition to the Corps' draft report selecting the Stoughton Alternative as LEDPA for the South Coast rail Project. Specifically, I have the following comments based on the Executive Summary ("ES") of the DEIS/DEIR.</p> <p>First, the stated purpose of the project is "to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford...." If the demand for transportation is fully met, then there is no need to more fully meet it.</p> <p>Second, the studies that form the economic basis for the project (ES at 3-4) are old and unreliable. All of the studies predate the severe economic crisis of 2008, which has created an economic sea change in the Commonwealth's economy.</p> <p>Third, given the tremendous changes in the economy that have occurred since this project started, it would be far less costly and far more practical to enhance the existing bus system (see ES at 5) for a two- or three-year trial period to see if there is any significant demand for more public transportation into Boston. The Corps' rejection of the no-build (enhanced bus) alternative is rooted in the conclusion that it "does not address the fundamental need for improved public transit service between New Bedford/Fall River and Boston...." (ES at 8) The Corps simply assumes the need for improved service, but such a finding is unsupported by any current, timely, and accurate studies.</p> <p>Fourth, the Corps failed to take into consideration 2010 Census findings. More and more people are moving more and more to the suburbs and working less and less in large cities. More people work at home or remotely, and go to "the office" several days a month. Technology is replacing the need for transportation. As technology improves dramatically, the need for moving people 50 miles one-way</p>	<p>Regarding the purpose and need statement, the phrase "more fully" was not intended to imply the need for the project has already been met.</p> <p>Post-2008 information on economic conditions has been incorporated in Chapter 4.3 and the ridership analyses have been updated to take into account downward revisions to future population and employment growth. The 2010 Census results were also incorporated in the updated CTPS modeling. These changes have not eliminated the transportation needs the project is intended to address. USACE's overall project purpose does not include economic development--the project is fundamentally a transportation project intended to address transportation problems. Encouraging smart growth is one aspect of the purpose and need statement adopted by MassDOT, along with the transportation problems that serve as USACE's overall project purpose.</p> <p>Cost and cost per rider is addressed in Chapter 3, the cost per rider is considered over a 30 year period. Chapter 3 explains the rationale for the LEDPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>on a daily basis by trains will decrease dramatically.</p> <p>Fifth, the draft concludes: "The rail connection is projected to create between 3,500 and 3,800 net new jobs within the Commonwealth by 2030-about two-thirds of which would locate in the South Coast region with the remaining third in Boston-Cambridge and other communities outside the region." (ES at 22) Two-thirds of 3,800 is 2,546, so we are talking about creating 2,546 jobs in the South Coast region over the next 20 years. As the project would cost \$2 billion (at a minimum), this translates to spending \$800,000 per job created. How absurd. Such expenditures are not in the public interest.</p> <p>Sixth, the absurdity extends to the project's cost per rider. It is projected that at most there will be 4,790 new riders. (ES at 8) Let's say there are 5,000. At a minimum cost of \$2 billion, this translates to \$400,000 per rider.</p> <p>The Stoughton Alternative will be a disaster for Stoughton, and it will not provide any meaningful benefits to the people of Fall River/New Bedford. At this point, the project only benefits the bureaucrats and consultants who have made a small fortune through the years for a folly of the highest magnitude. The Stoughton Alternative would be a complete, unadulterated disaster, and that the Corps should not hesitate to reject it as the LEDPA.</p>	
L-038.01	Robert Mendillo	Enclosed for filing is my opposition to the draft report, which concludes that The Stoughton Alternative is the LEDPA for this project.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-038.02	Robert Mendillo	As a resident of Stoughton since 1983, I am adamantly opposed to the South Coast Rail Project's Stoughton Alternative. Not only is the Stoughton Alternative not the LEOPA for MassDOT's pipe dream boondoggle project, The Stoughton Alternative would ruin Stoughton. It would also damage cities and towns north and south of Stoughton, and provide no appreciable benefits to the people of Fall River/New Bedford - who would be better served by having billions of dollars pumped into those communities rather than having it spent on a "Big Dig II" project that will saddle the Commonwealth with years and years of crushing debt.	Thank you for your comment.
L-038.03	Robert Mendillo	On March 23, 2011, the Corps released for comment its DEIS/DEIR, which concluded that the Stoughton Alternative was the LEDPA for the project. Despite repeated requests from local and state officials and residents of towns affected by the proposal, the Corps refused to extend the May 27, 2011 deadline for responding to the 2,500 page draft report. Moreover, the Corps held a May 4, 2011 hearing on the draft report in Mansfield-instead of in Stoughton, Easton, Canton or any other town that is on the route of the Stoughton Alternative. The Corps' refusal to grant citizens and towns any more time to respond to the draft report, and its refusal to hold a meeting in a town on the Stoughton Alternative's route, reflects a fundamental disregard for Stoughton, its citizens, and other communities and citizens that would be most affected by implementation of the Stoughton Alternative. It is certainly hoped that in reviewing these comments and those submitted by others, that the Corps will use its best efforts to focus on the actual day-to-day impact that such a monstrosity of a project would have on the people who live and work in Stoughton.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-038.04	Robert Mendillo	<p>Downtown Stoughton is still the hub of Stoughton. Unfortunately, it is almost blighted now. The Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and other town officials and groups are, however, actively considering plans for making it vibrant and attractive under the "smart growth" concepts that are being championed by local and statewide planners.</p> <p>The Stoughton Alternative is the enemy of smart growth. The extension of the train would create a Berlin Wall of ugliness, congestion, and discontent that would rip the downtown in half and cause everyone to ignore it at all costs. The Stoughton Alternative would turn downtown Stoughton into a ghost town, whose main activity would be noisy, long trains tying up traffic and zipping through at dangerous speeds.</p> <p>The ugliness and other negative effects of the Stoughton Alternative would kill any potential for private interest/investment in the downtown. It would render the existing historic train station useless and unused, and would hinder or eliminate the ability of residents to walk freely downtown.</p> <p>MassDOT has not identified one benefit that the Stoughton Alternative would provide to the downtown area - and that is because there is no benefit. Worse than simply providing no benefit, the Stoughton Alternative would kill downtown, sacrificing it on an altar of developing Fall River and New Bedford. The social injustice of such a proposal is outrageous and manifestly unfair to the Town. Simply put, the Stoughton Alternative implements MassDOT's brutal and brazen bureaucratic decision to kill Stoughton in order to advance its cockamamie idea for revitalizing New Bedford/Fall River.</p> <p>Moreover, as reported in The Boston Globe on May 18, 2011 (just last week), commuter rail ridership in 2010 was down 6.8% from 2008. This is according to the MBTA's own report, the 13th edition of "MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics." This is no time to be spending \$3 billion on a new train that would probably have the longest, most expensive, and least</p>	<p>The Stoughton Alternative would not create blight as suggested by the comment--Stoughton already has commuter rail service and there is no evidence it has caused blight. The relocated Stoughton Station plan includes areas for potential Transit Oriented Development.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>utilized trip in the system.</p> <p>Downtown Stoughton is still the hub of Stoughton. Unfortunately, it is almost blighted now. The Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and other town officials and groups are, however, actively considering plans for making it vibrant and attractive under the "smart growth" concepts that are being championed by local and statewide planners.</p> <p>The Stoughton Alternative is the enemy of smart growth. The extension of the train would create a Berlin Wall of ugliness, congestion, and discontent that would rip the downtown in half and cause everyone to ignore it at all costs. The Stoughton Alternative would turn downtown Stoughton into a ghost town, whose main activity would be noisy, long trains tying up traffic and zipping through at dangerous speeds.</p> <p>The ugliness and other negative effects of the Stoughton Alternative would kill any potential for private interest/investment in the downtown. It would render the existing historic train station useless and unused, and would hinder or eliminate the ability of residents to walk freely downtown.</p> <p>MassDOT has not identified one benefit that the Stoughton Alternative would provide to the downtown area - and that is because there is no benefit. Worse than simply providing no benefit, the Stoughton Alternative would kill downtown, sacrificing it on an altar of developing Fall River and New Bedford. The social injustice of such a proposal is outrageous and manifestly unfair to the Town. Simply put, the Stoughton Alternative implements MassDOT's brutal and brazen bureaucratic decision to kill Stoughton in order to advance its cockamamie idea for revitalizing New Bedford/Fall River.</p> <p>Moreover, as reported in The Boston Globe on May 18, 2011 (just last week), commuter rail ridership in 2010 was down 6.8% from 2008. This is according to the MBTA's own report, the 13th edition of "MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics."</p>	



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		This is no time to be spending \$3 billion on a new train that would probably have the longest, most expensive, and least utilized trip in the system.	
L-038.05	Robert Mendillo	<p>The Stoughton Alternative Would Jeopardize the Town's Safety and Image. The Stoughton Alternative unquestionably means many, many, many more trains through Town. The Corps certainly knows-without the need for any studies- that more trains means more tracks, more crossings, faster trains, freight trains, longer trains, more noise, more congestion, more whistles, more wind, more vibration, more days of trains running, more hours of trains running, more blocking of streets, more traffic, more emergencies, more injuries, more train-related police work, more pollution, more dirt, more frustration, and more discontent. This is all inevitable, because it is part and parcel of a train system running through downtown.</p> <p>The Stoughton Alternative thus would inevitably jeopardize the Town's safety and injure Stoughton's quality of life, reputation, self-confidence and pride.</p>	Safety at grade crossings was addressed in Chapter 4.1, along with traffic impacts. Noise and vibration impacts are addressed in Chapters 4.6, and 4.7, respectively.
L-038.06	Robert Mendillo	<p>The Stoughton Alternative Would Cause Irreparable Socioeconomic Harm to Stoughton.</p> <p>The Stoughton Alternative will enhance the socioeconomic status of Stoughton. The Stoughton Alternative - with all of the negatives outlined above - will cause people to leave town, will lower property values, will lower the tax base, and will hurt the schools. The Stoughton Alternative will make Stoughton a worse place to see, visit, live in, invest in, work in, go to school, and raise healthy families.</p>	Potential beneficial and adverse effects on property values in the vicinity of commuter rail lines are discussed in Chapter 4.3.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-038.07	Robert Mendillo	<p>Mitigation Would Not Cure the Stoughton Alternative. MassDOT has stated repeatedly in public that it is offering no mitigation to Stoughton. It has made clear that it will not consider a tunnel through the downtown area as was done in Hingham for the Greenbush line. Stoughton is not Hingham, and MassDOT obviously does not care to give Stoughton anything. MassDOT is engaging in class warfare, having determined that Stoughton and its people simply are not worthy of the consideration that the more educated, more influential, more affluent, and less diverse people of Hingham were given to establish a Greenbush line-a line that is woefully underutilized.</p> <p>Moreover, MassDOT plans to abandon the existing Stoughton Station, which is a further indication of its callous approach to Stoughton: the most attractive and historic station on the line is being cast aside in the rush to rush trains through town.</p>	A tunnel through downtown Stoughton is not a practicable alternative- the above ground alignment would not cause impacts that would warrant the increased cost.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-038.08	Robert Mendillo	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative is better than any of the train alternatives for a number of reasons.</p> <p>First, the bus system is less costly to build and maintain.</p> <p>Second, in terms of "classic" environmental impact, the bus is less damaging and disruptive. The rapid bus would be built on or immediately adjacent to existing highway routes, and would not require the development of hundreds of miles of train track through areas that have little or no development.</p> <p>Third, transportation studies and commentators have in recent years championed rapid bus service over rail because it is environmentally better than trains. See e.g. Baltimore Business Journal, January 16, 2009 ("Enhanced buses are better than light-rail cars along the proposed Purple Line in Maryland, according to a study from the World Resources Institute"); On Earth Magazine, L. Gravitz (January 11, 2010) ("Bus rapid transit has begun to emerge as an appealing, cost effective alternative to trains in many metropolitan regions in the U. S."); Rocky Mountain News, R. O'Toole (Feb, 21, 2009) (bus rapid transit better than trains in hard times, noting that "light-rail lines use as much energy and generate more greenhouse gases per passenger-mile than the average SUV"); Transform, <a href="http://transformca.org/brt/key-benefits-bus-rapid-transit-south-bay">transformca.org/brt/key-benefits-bus-rapid-transit-south-bay</a> ("Key Benefits" of Bus Rapid Transit in the South Bay, California area include "faster service, increasing public transportation ridership, better air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, affordable and cost effective, and socially just and equitable"); Instituto Nacional de Ecologia, The Benefits and Costs of a Bus Rapid Transit System in Mexico City" (Final Report, May 2008 (benefits include "the reduction in local emissions and resultant health impacts, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and the reduction in travel time"); Diesel Fuel News. J. Peckham (July 7, 2003) ("Diesel-electric hybrid 'bus rapid transit' [BRT] not only is vastly cheaper to build and operate than electric train Metro rail systems, but also produces less emissions once electric generation emissions are included," in reporting on a</p>	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative has been eliminated, refer to Chapter 3 for the rationale.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>study by the Washington, D. C. Breakthrough Technologies Institute, entitled: "The Electric Rail Dilemma: Clean Transportation from Dirty Electricity?"); Climate Progress, "Making Buses Cool Again" (July 19, 2009) (bus rapid transit" could cut nearly three times more emissions than light-rail powered by coal-based electricity"); Christian Science Monitor. J. Lowe (June 9, 2009) (reporting University of California at Berkley study that train can be worse for climate than plane, and that traveling in a gas-guzzling SUV can be better than taking a train into the city from suburbia).</p> <p>The Rapid Bus Alternative would also eliminate the danger of freight trains. Freight trains pose a special danger to Stoughton. The website for the railway industry, railway-technology.com. Recognizes that "Freight trains are particularly guilty of noise pollution ...." In 2010, a super freight train - extending some 3 ½ miles - rolled through Southern California over the weekend. The 18,000-foot-long train was two to three times the length of a typical freight train. It ran at up to 70 mph, and took 3 to 5 minutes to clear a grade crossing. Los Angeles Times, "Safety, traffic concerns raised when 3.5 mile-long freight train rolls through L. A. Basin" (Jan. 12, 2010). The article also reported that there are no state or federal limits on the length of trains.</p> <p>The Rapid Bus Alternative would create far less damaging problems than any of the train alternatives. Moreover, rail service into South Station is already overly congested. The Rapid Bus Alternative would avoid further congestion.</p> <p>Across the country, rapid transit service is being seen as a greener, less expensive, and easier way for persons to commute. Indeed, this is true around the world. As Time magazine recently reported (May 16, 2011), Curitiba, Brazil, "the original smart city," has just opened a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network instead of a commuter rail or subway system, and, "At least 83 cities worldwide have copied Curitiba's BRT system." The bus would service the Fall River/New Bedford area without causing the problems, dangers and complaints</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>that are an inescapable aspect of any of the train alternatives.</p> <p>The Rapid Bus Alternative would give Stoughton the opportunity to develop the town in a smart growth manner, to rebuild the downtown, and to maintain and enhance the Town's aesthetic and socioeconomic health.</p> <p>In choosing between train and rapid bus alternatives, there appear to be no projects where the Corps has determined that a train and not a rapid bus was the LEDPA. This project should not be the first.</p>	



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-039.01	Donald Michaud	<p>NONE of the Attleboro hybrid, bypass or alternatives should be selected for the proposed Fall River/New Bedford South Coast Rail Project.</p> <p>Of all the alternatives I support the Stoughton Route with Dean Street and without Whittenton because (1) it is the most direct, (2) offers the most ridership, (3) it has the best trip time, (4) its reduced travel time is the advantage over the other options, (5) less acres of wetlands will be taken, (6) it is the only direct straight route to Boston and (7) it is cost/benefit effective at \$1.5 to \$1.9 Billion.</p> <p>Stoughton (without Whittenton) with Dean Street is the best because of these facts:</p> <p>FACT: It has the best cost/ benefit/ effectiveness versus the others</p> <p>FACT: The trip time is 72-74 minutes, which is better than the Other alternatives.</p> <p>FACT: Less acres of wetlands will be taken compared to the Attleboro By-pass and alternatives. Stoughton is 6.74 acres versus Attleboro of 7.82 to 8.50 acres. Middleboro is 3.61 acres.</p> <p>FACT: It is compatible with the existing rail system.</p> <p>FACT: It is a STRAIGHT SHOT to Boston.</p> <p>FACT: It adds another direct rail line to Boston.</p> <p>FACT: Freight trains with container, bulk, tanker or other shipments can move faster from cargo ships or businesses between Boston, New Bedford or Fall River.</p> <p>FACT: There would be no additional annual train assessment for Attleboro to pay since the train will not stop or pass thru the Attleboro area.</p> <p>FACT: The WHITTENDON SITE for a station should be eliminated since it will add to the trip time on the trains.</p> <p>FACT: The DEAN STREET SITE for a station should be used since it would benefit the City of Taunton and nearby towns for train ridership, convenient shopping &amp; parking and least number of grade crossings.</p> <p>FACT: The WHITTENDON SITE for a station would result in 14</p>	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.</p> <p>Cost per rider information for the alternatives is presented in Table 3.3-6. Stoughton Diesel has the lowest cost per rider of the build alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>The Stoughton Electric Alternative travel time from New Bedford to Boston in the peak period is 77 minutes based on the refined run time analyses for the FEIS/FEIR, but it remains the fastest of the alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		to 15 at grade crossing which would unnecessarily cripple the center of the City of Taunton.	
L-039.02	Donald Michaud	<p>I submit the following FACTS concerning the ATTLEBORO BY-PASS ALTERNATIVE:</p> <p>FACT: The electrification of the Boston to New York line for the Acela Train has dramatically increased the train noise from freight trains and the double tiering of Passenger Trains up and down Richardson Avenue.</p> <p>FACT: The cement footings for the electrification installation of the Boston to New York rail line caused house foundation cracks. This could happen for the Attleboro By-Pass to myself and the 35-homes across the street and the 44-homes at Misty Meadows and 49-Condos on the other side of the National Grid High Voltage Transmission Lines. These high voltage transmission lines carry thousands of volts and would prove disastrous and disruptive if a train accident occurred.</p> <p>FACT: Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro is a Regional Hospital which services Norton and Mansfield. Richardson Avenue and Pleasant Street (Route 123) are used day and night by their ambulances to take emergency patients to the Sturdy Memorial Hospital.</p> <p>FACT: The noise and vibration from these passenger and freight trains would be markedly increased compared to the Noise of the freight and passenger trains on the Boston to New York electrified rail line because of the proximity to these homes and condos.</p>	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
L-039.03	Donald Michaud	<p>I support the Stoughton alternative with the Dean Street station and the elimination of the Whittenton station.</p> <p>I recommend this Stoughton Rail Alternative to the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs AS the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-035.01	William Morse	I am a resident of Easton, for over fifty years. I would like to be recorded as favoring the rail extension through Stoughton, Easton and Raynham to Fall River and New Bedford.	Thank you for your comment.
L-078.01	Robert Mullen	I am opposed to the South Coast Rail going through Stoughton. There is so much to say and to show to your agency in hopes of swaying the Army Corp of Engineers NOT to go forward with the Stoughton Alternative. Stoughton is a town that was incorporated in 1726, some 50 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The town has much to offer people living here and to those wishing to settle here due to its proximity to the routes 24, 95, 495 and to the city of Boston. Stoughton's unique characteristics should not be altered or destroyed for other cities that wish to have a commuter rail.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-078.02	Robert Mullen	<p>I believe that this proposed rail plan reveals several shortcomings. Public Safety is my number one concern. There is a very large gaping public safety threat if this proposed rail line comes through Stoughton. The proposed plan would have two train tracks through Stoughton Center with the double track being extended from Easton through Stoughton to Canton and these tracks are within close proximity to three schools (Stoughton High, Middle and the West Schools).</p> <p>Add this fact to the high number (seven) of road crossings and the end result is a very real public safety threat. No matter how one mitigates this public safety threat, children's lives are at stake along with the lives of the vehicle occupants that come in contact with a moving train. In other towns and cities across our state and across the nation, children and adults do get injured and killed by trains. Mitigating the public safety issues by installing safety mechanisms or crossing arms and bells did not prevent these injuries or deaths. As I review this plan, the town of Stoughton is literally cut in half by these two tracks. Traffic during rush hour on Central Street is already backed up to Route 138. Allowing additional trains to come through Stoughton, believe creates additional burdens on an already difficult traffic situation. Additionally, public safety vehicles may be impacted waiting for trains to pass at the crossings thus having the potential to increase the emergency response times to Stoughton residents.</p>	<p>Public safety at grade crossings is addressed in Chapter 4.1. In developed areas, the right-of-way would be fenced to prevent unauthorized access.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-078.03	Robert Mullen	<p>I believe that our Environment is at risk if this proposed rail line comes through Stoughton. The environment is everyone's concern. The proposed line will go through the Hockomock Swap. This swamp has received the designation of ACEC, Area of Critical Environmental Concern by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Per the public web site MASS.GOV, the Hockomock Swamp and associated wetlands and water bodies comprise the largest vegetated wetland system in Massachusetts. This area contains 16,950 acres. This website also notes the following:</p> <p>"The Hockomock Swamp is a vast natural and scenic area. Because of its size, it is a unique and irreplaceable wildlife habitat. It is also the location of at least 13 rare and endangered species. According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the archaeological sites in the vicinity of this wetland complex are known to span a period of 9000 years; the potential quality and significance of the archaeological resources are enormous. Productive agricultural lands are located on the uplands adjacent to the wetlands, brooks, and rivers."</p> <p>As you can see, the Hockomock Swamp is an unique and an irreplaceable wildlife habitat. I am not an environmental expert by any means. But what I do know is that a train going through this area and/or any chemicals that may fall into this body of water would cause harm and more than likely irreversible harm.</p>	The environmental issues cited in the comment were studied carefully in the EIS/EIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-078.04	Robert Mullen	<p>I read through the reviews of the environmental issues by the consultants and these reports do not even broach the various subjects of hazardous materials that can be carried by trains. The study, at least what I can see, only studies the trestle or track that would be built in this swamp. Nothing has been reviewed, discussed nor studied the impact of an environmental spill that can occur from diesel fuel or from other chemicals carried by freight trains. Can a reasonable person conclude that since the various chemicals that may be carried by a freight train have not been discussed, thus lead to a conclusion that NO chemicals or other hazardous materials will be allowed on this proposed South Coast Rail? I would like to get confirmation on this issue from the Army Corps of Engineers. If freight trains with chemicals and hazardous waste will be allowed then where are the studies for the South Coast Rail? What would happen if a rail car carrying chlorine leaked in the middle of Stoughton Center or in Hockomock Swamp? Where are the studies for the South Coast Rail of potential explosions or spills from train cars carrying various fuels or combustible chemicals? The consultants should have reported on these concerns.</p>	<p>No future freight service is currently planned or anticipated on the currently out-of-service Whittenton Branch or Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road in Taunton. Freight traffic is currently planned only on the active segments currently used by freight trains, and would be allowed to carry the same loads as currently permitted. There would be no change in risk of or response to chemical spills or explosions.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-078.05	Robert Mullen	<p>I believe Funding is another real issue that tends to be never fully adequate. To build a new rail line while the current lines suffer from lagging or inadequate funding, I believe is not efficient. A public report issued on November 1, 2009, entitled MBTA Review documents safety issues and financial concerns. On page 22 of this public report states the following. "The MBTA has accomplished many impressive achievements in enhancing safety and service, yet the fact remains that it is dealing with an extensive, aging infrastructure that requires continuous maintenance, refurbishment and replacement. Unfortunately, the cost of the projects required to address these concerns far exceeds the MBTA's capital improvement budget, which is constrained by the structural deficit discussed in the previous section. As a result, many projects that would address critical safety or system reliability issues are not funded each year."</p> <p>I understand that the South Coast Rail plan may cost around \$1 billion. Wouldn't this money be better spent supporting the current infrastructure of the MBTA and not towards building another rail line that will just cost more monies to maintain?</p>	Funding issues are outside the scope of the EIS/EIR.
L-078.06	Robert Mullen	<p>Lastly, I believe in the science and benefits of Technology that will in the foreseeable future allow more commuters to work from home and in essence, telecommute. This technology, in my opinion is becoming more and more acceptable and may lead to small but measureable declines in the number of daily commuters whether they are by vehicle or mass transit. I believe that the ridership projections for the South Coast Rail are a bit too aggressive. Given the cost of a daily roundtrip ticket versus carpooling, use of buses and the coming of age of telecommuting, the ridership projections are probably high.</p>	These trends are considered in the CTPS regional transportation model.
L-022.01	Pauline Nadeau	<p>Having been an Earth Science teacher it goes without saying that the Stoughton Alternative is our best shot.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-022.02	Pauline Nadeau	<p>A speaker at the New Bedford hearing on May 5th mentioned the many sporting events he'd like to attend, but the hassle of traffic, parking fees , etc. is daunting. I would like to take this opportunity to also include the many cultural events I miss for those same reasons. An even bigger and more important point is that we're so close to the best medical facilities in the world and yet so far due to that horrendous Route 24 traffic.</p> <p>Going to college in North Easton was a breeze back in the late fifties and Route 24 ended in Stoughton at that time. Now, the horror show begins at 140 where the New Bedford people join us. I cringe at the amount of fuel wasted (and now the cost is prohibitive) and the amount of carbon dioxide entering our atmosphere!</p> <p>I end with the specter of facilities that such crowded roadways engender. How many more deaths and crashes are you willing to be responsible for?</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-022.03	Pauline Nadeau	I agree with many of the speakers and local politicians that we've studied this to death. The new rail is nothing but a win win opportunity for us to encompass NOW!	Thank you for your comment.
E-062.01	Linda Palmieri	<p>The Stoughton route is the best of all that are proposed.</p> <p>It is more direct route that will provide the shortest commuting time - and used of electric system will be environmentally friendly. It will be amenable to future technologies.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-022.01	Dennis Paquette	I agree with the conclusions that identify the Stoughton alternative as providing the best service to the communities in the South Coast region and providing the least environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective. Also, the fact that the Stoughton route follows rail beds that were in use a little over fifty years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.	<p>Thank you for your comment. Project effects on transportation are fully considered in Chapter 4.1.</p> <p>The Whittenton Route was the route last used in ca. 1958. The Stoughton route between Route 138 and Longmeadow Road was last used in ca. 1916.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-022.02	Dennis Paquette	<p>I believe the final report should include double tracking the rail lines to provide future capacity and faster service. It is important that any design, permitting, and building of the rail service be completed with an eye towards enhancing or expanding the service in the future. In addition, I also believe that travel time and frequency of service will be important factors to the success of this project. To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel time from the South Coast to Boston South Station be no more than seventy minutes. Shorter commuting time gives businesses greater access to more workers with specialized skills, while residents of the region gain connectivity to employment opportunities along the Route 128 corridor and in the business districts of Boston.</p> <p>I also encourage full service throughout the day to meet demand and encourage ridership. A minimum of three trains in the morning peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak period should be utilized. This includes full weekend service and inter-city service between Taunton, New Bedford and Fall River to encourage regional mobility. I would also like to see a late evening train service to Boston to be considered for residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service would help support our growing tourism economy by connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our national park, our ferry service to Martha's Vineyard, and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene here in the South Coast.</p>	<p>Double tracking is proposed where necessary for the operation of this project, see Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8. It would not be environmentally or financially prudent to build double track along the entire corridor.</p> <p>The travel time from New Bedford to Boston in the peak period is 77 minutes based on the refined run time analyses for the FEIS/FEIR (for the Stoughton Electric Alternative). The operating plan is presented in Chapter 3, Table 3.2-5. The proposed operations would have four peak period trains to each of the terminal stations of New Bedford and Fall River. This translates to approximately 30-minute service on both the Fall River Secondary and the New Bedford Main Line, and an 18 minute headway on the trunk (shared) portion of the route north of Myricks Junction. During the off-peak periods, six additional trains would operate on a 3 hour frequency from the terminal stations and 90 minutes on the trunk portion. This provides 10 round trip trains per weekday from each terminal station.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-022.03	Dennis Paquette	<p>I believe commuter rail extension is critical to economic development and growth in the region and in keeping with long-range “Smart Growth” planning strategies that support the environment and encourage development around priority development areas. Commuter rail extension to the South Coast will also help meet existing and future demand for public transportation and enhance regional mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region by reducing congestion and increasing travel choice. I encourage the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This is an important project for the South Coast region. The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a 50-mile radius of Boston without rail transit service, service that will provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the state. We have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for more than two decades and we are anxious for this process to be completed, so that the state can move onto the next critical step in the project.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The benefits cited in the comment were considered in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-033.01	Daniel Pare	<p>I believe that the benefits of such a train line do not outweigh the costs. As a citizen who thinks care for the environment should be one of our priorities, I appreciate the concept of robust public transportation. So I note the irony that the proposed Stoughton line extension will probably be more of an environmental drawback than a boon. A new train through Easton will cause more environmental fallout than another South Coast Rail proposal, a rapid bus line on a designated highway lane. Whereas the bus project would emerge from highways already in place, the train line would require a new train service running through the sensitive Hockomock Swamp region, valuable to our drinking water and to our local ecology in general. It is also questionable that the train line would actually have much of a ridership, making it even harder to justify its heavy financial and environmental costs.</p> <p>I also worry that a new fleet of trains, especially diesel fuel trains, may wind up obsolete almost before it starts service. As greener energy technologies arrive, we will be stuck with an ecologically- and economically-backwards system.</p>	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p> <p>Both diesel and electric commuter rail options were considered.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-033.02	Daniel Pare	<p>* Extending the Stoughton train line will cost much more money than the proposed rapid bus line – so much so, in fact, that my state congresswoman, Rep. Geraldine Creedon, commented to me that the funding for the project is “not sustainable.”</p> <p>* The potential arrival of a Middleboro casino will pose traffic and transportation needs for which an Easton rail line does nothing. Perhaps a rapid bus line, running on the highways through and near Middleboro, will serve these needs. (The now-discarded proposal to expand Middleboro train service may have also accomplished this.)</p> <p>* The train would cut through densely developed communities. For instance, it would bisect Easton and require 7 grade crossings, which will impact traffic and travel for residents.</p> <p>* The funds required for the train project might be better spent on other things, including more direct economic investment on the South Shore. Merely transporting some South Shore people to Boston is not a solution.</p>	<p>The cost of the alternatives was considered by USACE (Section 3.2.18). The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p> <p>The Mashpee Wampanoag Casino is currently proposed for Taunton, not Middleboro.</p> <p>Grade crossing impacts were evaluated in Chapter 4.1.</p> <p>Spending funds on other things (such as direct economic investment) is an alternative outside the scope of this EIS/EIR because it would not address the purpose and need for the project.</p>
F-002.01	Peter Paull, Jr.	<p>I strongly support the South Coast Rail Project for the reason it will greatly reduce the unnecessary traffic congestion and delays on Route 24.</p> <p>The rail will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Save countless gallons of fuel.</li> <li>2. Reduce pollution from cars stuck in traffic.</li> <li>3. Reduce wasted man-hours of worker productivity.</li> </ol> <p>Anyone who has an input on this issue should be first required to drive Route 24 to Boston during rush hour.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-017.01	Ken Petitti	<p>I'm writing to voice my wholehearted support for the South Coast Rail Project. With gas prices @ nearly \$4 per gallon and all the environmental issues related to producing additional power sources; commuter rail is the obvious answer. Smart growth, fully utilizing our cities' capacities, further supports our environment along with decreasing our need for gasoline, etc.</p> <p>Fall River and New Bedford can be real growth centers in Massachusetts for middle income families that are priced out of the Boston real estate market. For decades these communities have sent their tax dollars to the greater Boston area as their infrastructure was neglected. Fall River and New Bedford can now add their affordable housing to the benefit of Boston. Boston will have a larger pool of workers that will now have a means to get in and out of Boston at a reasonable price and on a scheduled train versus being at the mercy of the Distress-way (I commuted for 15+ years).</p> <p>This project has been sidetracked for far too long; now is the time to make the right decision and build commuter rail to the benefit of all of Massachusetts.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-036.01	William Pezzella	<p>Keep the trains out of Easton !!!!</p> <p>Twelve years ago I sent a letter to Mr. David Durand opposing the trains going through Easton when the projected cost was 460 million dollars.</p> <p>I was against it then, and still against it now.</p> <p>I live a 1/2 mile away from the tracks and within 2 miles of 4 grade crossing. I don't want to listen to horns blasting every 15 minutes at peak hours. Nor do I want 40 to 50 trains speeding through Easton at 50 to 60 miles per hour. I know our selectwoman has proposed a "no-whistle" plan at crossings. How safe can that possibly be. I would only be a matter of time before someone gets killed. And the MBTA will tell us "sorry" statistically these things just happen.</p> <p>I've been to several meetings and it seems to me the MBTA has a mathematical formula for everything from ridership, wetland studies, vibration studies, emission studies parking / infrastructure studies, and environmental studies. The only study they won't share with us is, what is the potential of deaths or accidents at the 46 miles of track and 37 grade crossing.</p> <p>Frankly, it's not my problem how the people from New Bedford get to Boston. People in Boston and the surrounding towns can't find high paying jobs in Boston.</p> <p>What makes you think the train is going to bring more qualified people to the downtown area ?</p> <p>Cultural and Sporting events, are you serious? The average family can't afford to spend \$300 or \$400 to get to see a play or a Red Sox game.</p> <p>The project is now projected at \$1.4 to \$1.9 billion. The MBTA is current operating at billions of dollar deficit.</p>	<p>Noise impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.6, including train horn noise impacts. Establishing quiet zones at grade crossings is discussed as a possible mitigation option, although it is noted that MassDOT is not proposing quiet zones at this time.</p> <p>Safety impacts of at-grade crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.1, including a quantitative analysis of an incident occurring.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>The train would benefit a small percentage who have jobs in Boston. The rail is not going to help the 80% of the mill town worker who need it the most.</p> <p>I don't believe trains going through this town are going improve our quality of life, improve the tax rate, or increase our property value.</p>	
E-044.01	Susan Plante	<p>I am writing to vigorously oppose the South Coast Rail Project going through our town of Easton based on the deleterious impact on our drinking water, 7 crossings that jeopardize public safety, irrevocable environmental damage to the Hockomock Swamp and damage to many historical buildings in our town.</p> <p>When I was working as a VNA nurse in the south shore area, I found myself spending up many extra minutes a day waiting at train crossings. Sometimes the train never came which prompted some drivers to drive through the down crossing gates. If grown-ups take such risks, I shudder to imagine how children and adolescents will respond to waiting many minutes for a train that isn't yet there.</p> <p>Dividing our town will also have a serious negative impact on our fire, police and ambulance services as the majority of our town will be on the "wrong side of the tracks" when an emergency arises. Waiting at a train crossing may make the difference between life and death.</p>	The environmental and transportation issues cited in the comment were studied in the EIS/EIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-063.01	Brian Reardon	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Feasibility – it’s unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.</p> <p>Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).</p> <p>Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth’s preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton’s most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.</p> <p>Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.</p> <p>Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.</p>	<p>Cost was among the considerations in the evaluation of alternatives presented in Chapter 3. Formal cost-benefit or cost effectiveness analysis is not required by CEQ or USACE NEPA regulations. Cost benefit analysis is similarly not required under MEPA. Therefore, determining whether the project passes cost/benefit analysis tests is outside the scope of this FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>The ridership modeling was conducted by CTPS, an agency with appropriate technical expertise in travel demand modeling using a regional model that has been accepted by FHWA/FTA as appropriate for supporting regional transportation conformity determinations required under the Clean Air Act. The modeling does not assume all people in towns with existing service would shift to new stations in other towns. The model estimates the mode and route choice of each area based on the estimated travel time/cost for a particular trip.</p> <p>The environmental issues raised by the comment were thoroughly considered in the environmental review process and mitigation measures developed, as appropriate. Both diesel and electric commuter rail alternatives were considered.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.	
E-063.02	Brian Reardon	The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p> <p>USACE has not yet made a public interest determination for the project, but will do so prior to the permit decision. Section 3.3.4 concludes there is no alternative to the Stoughton Electric Alternative that would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, and also does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-064.01	Jennifer Reardon	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.</p> <p>Cost – the \$2 billion dollar plus cost of the project fails the cost/benefit analysis.</p> <p>Feasibility – it’s unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275-\$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of one hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.</p> <p>Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).</p> <p>Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth’s preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton’s most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.</p> <p>Seven traffic crossings – these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.</p> <p>Historical areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.</p>	See response to comment E-063.01.

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		Dividing the town impedes police/fire/ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.	
E-064.02	Jennifer Reardon	The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
L-081.01	Curt Rice	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice that there are many reasons that I am completely against the Stoughton Rail Alternative. The major concern is the cost that would be associated with such a project. The Stoughton alternative is fiscally irresponsible as it increases the taxes burden for all tax payers plus increases the debt for our children and beyond. The MBTA is poorly managed now and they have been operating at a loss for many years. This will even make it worse on how they operate. I completely disagree with the ROI with this project as there is no future with such a line being established. This will also have a major effect on the environment and the town water supply in Easton.</p> <p>The Stoughton alternative would also ruin an important historical area in Easton. North Easton is a national treasure with buildings designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and landscaping from Frederick Law Olmsted. The Ames family has been an important part of our national history with the many buildings that manufactured shovels. These shovels were supplied the United States Military and were used during World War I through the Korean War. These buildings will be affected with a rail running right next to them.</p>	<p>The cost of the alternatives was considered by USACE (Section 3.2.18).</p> <p>With mitigation and drainage features in place, the build alternatives are not expected to impair any surface or groundwater resources, including public water supplies. See Chapter 4.17.</p> <p>Cultural resource impacts are detailed in Chapter 4.8. The vibration analyses for each of the diesel and electric alternatives indicate that the vibration levels from train pass-bys are below the threshold to cause structural damage to surrounding buildings or structures. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of functioning passenger and/or freight railroads in the past.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-081.02	Curt Rice	If the politicians were truly for the people, they would see a bus service makes the most common sense. A bus line is more fiscally responsible and would be easier to dissolve than a rail system if it didn't work out. Once a rail system is in place, the environment and landscape will be impacted forever.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
E-037.01	Dave Richwine	hi, just testing an e-mail address on southeast rail hearings.....can you hit reply if you got this loud and clear?	Test email was responded to.
L-082.01	Kathy Romero	Wetland Conditions – The Hockomock Swamp, a state-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), has been called “The Wonder Wetland” for decades. From walking the existing “rail bed” (which is an over-enthusiastic description of what is there) throughout the past 19 years, I can tell you that water flows every which way due to streams that have been disturbed and relocated in the past. At some times of the year, the bed is flooded, under water, and is impassable. I believe that the level of upgrade needed to the existing “rail bed” has been underestimated. Therefore estimates on wetland alteration and the alteration of other protected resources have been underestimated. Please require the project proponents to address this.	Impacts to the Hockomock Swamp have been thoroughly studied.
L-082.02	Kathy Romero	Wildlife - I volunteer to identify turtle migration routes and other wildlife projects associated with the Hockomock Swamp. It is critical that wildlife migration routes, for “ordinary” wildlife as well as for rare and endangered species, not be fragmented but remain connected. Losing that connectivity will put in jeopardy not only the animal species but years of taxpayer money and other resources that have been spent on projects to protect ordinary wildlife as well as to revitalize populations of rare and endangered species. Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife has spent a considerable amount of taxpayer money on the purchase of land and conservation restrictions associated with the Hockomock Swamp. Please do not waste those resources by fragmenting the wildlife habitat in the Hockomock Swamp.	Wildlife habitat impacts, including fragmentation, are addressed in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity. This chapter also describes the mitigation measures incorporated in the project to minimize these types of impacts.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-082.03	Kathy Romero	<p>Economics – A train from Fall River/New Bedford to/from Boston makes no economic sense. I take the Bloom Bus to/from Boston every day. Up until a couple of years ago, they had a run from Fall River to/from Boston. They discontinued it because of a lack of riders. About ten people (different people) would take the bus in a month – which means that people were not taking it to work in Boston. Please do not support spending my tax dollars on this train. I support using my tax dollars to employ people in Fall River and New Bedford not put them on a train to Boston where there are scarce jobs as well. Many of our tax dollars already go to support Fall River and New Bedford as these cities receive many large grants and subsidies from the state and federal government. Other riders along the proposed train route already have alternative transportation options.</p> <p>I have lived in Raynham for 49 years. We decided to raise our family in Raynham because we like small towns. I keep reading about how regional planners cannot wait to put economic development along the train route. Please do not support destroying our small town as well as other small towns along the route. People make a choice to live in a small town rather than a big city. Our neighborhood, which is parallel to the existing “rail bed”, is located in a farm and forest zoning district with many small farms. This lifestyle should be supported and celebrated, not destroyed.</p> <p>Where is the money going to come from to construct this route? Where will the money come from to maintain it? Will ridership support it? No. Ridership estimates are grossly overstated.</p>	<p>The existing bus service is subject to the same highway congestion as general auto traffic and thus is not representative of the existing or future demand for the faster service provided by commuter rail.</p> <p>The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region (as measured by surveys), and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20.)</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-082.04	Kathy Romero	Private Wells – There are private drinking water wells along the train route, specifically, all along Prospect Hill Street (where we live) in Raynham. Our road dead ends in the Hockomock Swamp. There is no access to public drinking water on our street and the street is physically located in Taunton – although nowhere near another street in Taunton - so we will not be seeing public water. Trains risk polluting our private wells through spills and leaks as well as through the associated “economic development” that regional planners are eager to construct along the train route.	Water resource impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.17. An analysis of individual impacts to private wells was not performed for the FEIS/FEIR, but the steps taken to minimize the potential for groundwater contamination and drinking water supply impairment under each alternative would also reduce the potential for any impacts to private wells. Prior to the construction of any element discussed in this report, private wells would be located and inventoried. Based on this inventory, appropriate design modifications would be undertaken to minimize or avoid impacts to private wells.
L-082.05	Kathy Romero	<p>Conservation – There is nothing about this project that will conserve anything. Negative impacts to wildlife; wetlands; floodplain; and other natural resources in this ACEC, as well as to the local economies of small towns, will be devastating.</p> <p>Any minimal benefits accrued from this proposal do not outweigh the significant environmental and economic losses, short-term and long-term, that will result from this proposal. Public agencies have a responsibility to protect the natural resources that we hold in common and to consider the economies and way of life in small towns in southeastern Massachusetts. Please stop this project. Thank you for considering my comments.</p>	The resources cited in the comment were considered by USACE, as were the benefits of the project.
L-017.01	Dr. T.K. Roy	<p>The South Coast Rail is a very vital project for not only residents of southeastern Massachusetts but for the Boston area and the entire state in general.</p> <p>It will be a very convenient and environment friendly transportation for the residents connecting them to the rest of the population particularly to the north including Boston, Route 128 belt area.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
L-017.02	Dr. T.K. Roy	It would be better to have an electric train system for a long term facility because it would be able to use other green sources of energy like wind and solar energy. Also it will be faster and needs less maintenance once it's built.	Electric and diesel options were considered for the commuter rail alternatives.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-017.03	Dr. T.K. Roy	It would be an economic boost for the thousands of residents here. They will have access to jobs available in other areas with easy commute.	Access to jobs was an aspect of the need for the project described in Chapter 2.
E-065.01	Tricia Roy	We believe that the Southcoast Rail will have positive economic implications for the Greater New Bedford area. People can get and keep jobs in Boston and still live in the scenic Southcoast, where they will spend their wages in local businesses. I work in New Bedford, but frequently must travel to board meetings in Boston. My husband is a civil engineer/architect/urban planner in need of meaningful work; he's been working as a security guard in order to make ends meet. This project would present a chance for him to "give back" to our community if he can assist in its implementation. And naturally, it would be the central artery of this region, pumping new blood into a depressed area. As a financial counselor, I work with people every day that, like my husband, need a opportunity to branch out and find employment beyond the local area.	Thank you for your comment.
E-065.02	Tricia Roy	We support the Stoughton Alternative with electric mode to best meet the future demand for public transportation between Fall River/New Bedford and Boston. We believe, after fully reading the study, that this alternative best balances transportation and environmental benefits with environmental impacts.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-016.01	M. Abdul Shibli	<p>So, as you can imagine having a commuter rail through Easton would be good for young families like us. Even now, for me, for my kids, and also for my visitors. I have done some serious work as an environmental economist (particularly with one of Harvard's Environmental Policy programs) and understand the pro and con arguments of building a commuter rail system. I feel that given all the scrutiny this project has received over the last 20 years (if not more), the economic, environmental, and developmental benefits for Massachusetts are overwhelming. Plus, as a resident, my family and I feel that this will be very beneficial to us. My son lives in Jamaica Plain, and uses the public transportation system when available. My daughter, who went to Tufts for her undergraduate (as a resident), and is an attorney working in NYC, is an avid train rider, and will be able to come and visit us more often if she can catch a commuter train to North Easton from South Station! By the way, both attended the Public Schools in Easton.</p> <p>I hope I have conveyed in this brief statement why I look forward to a rail connection that is economical and completed without any additional impediments. Please feel free to contact me if you need more information or to provide additional supporting materials.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
E-066.01	James Stanton	We need rail service as soon as possible.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
F-004.01	Eric Stevens	I oppose the Stoughton extension because I feel the state has enough resources in this area that are not used correctly or being properly maintained. The money allowed or allocated for this project should be used to fix roads, bridges, and existing transportation. Based on the low ridership on recent tracks added, this project is a complete waste of hard earned taxpayer dollars. The percentage of people that will wish to pay the price to ride into Boston and commute more than 3 hours per day can not possibly be enough reason to permanently ruin the historical landmarks, natural resources and quiet suburban communities like Easton. I am greatly concerned about the damage from vibration that would be done to my house and property as I would border this track. Noise, air pollution and the town water supply are also a great concern and that few or no mitigation measures are planned.	The environmental issues raised in the comment were addressed in the FEIS/FEIR. No vibration damage to buildings is anticipated. Mitigation measures are summarized in Chapter 7.
E-067.01	S. Sull	DON'T DO IT!	Thank you for your comment.
E-067.02	S. Sull	Bring jobs and businesses to our area where we can commute with the same ease as Bostonians do to their jobs. Why should we spend all our time and money going in there and leaving our communities down here penniless and wanting always???? This whole thing is madness- and as far as the Lakeville line, it sure didn't do anything great for our area.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-034.01	Joan Sullivan	<p>I am an Easton resident, and while I've heard all of the reasons why Easton residents don't want the train to go through the town, I haven't seen any information about why there needs to be service between Boston and New Bedford and Fall River. I'm sure some sort of studies have been done, but where are the actual figures of how many cars drive on the road from these towns to Boston every day? And of those cars, how many people have been interviewed to see if they would take a train into Boston instead? The cost of this extension is enormous, and the information I mention needs to be gathered to justify the cost. We all know the cost of the train through Hingham and how ridership is no where near what estimates said it would be. Instead of using the same type of estimates for the Stoughton line extension and spending millions and millions of dollars for a train that no one will ride, you should take a step back and see if the cost outweighs the benefit. I think it does.</p>	<p>The purpose and need for the project is explained in Chapter 2.</p> <p>Information on existing traffic conditions and ridership projections is provided in Chapter 4.1. No mode choice surveys were conducted.</p> <p>Cost was among the considerations in the evaluation of alternatives presented in Chapter 3. Formal cost-benefit or cost effectiveness analysis is not required by CEQ or USACE NEPA regulations. Cost benefit analysis is similarly not required under MEPA. Therefore, determining whether the project passes cost/benefit analysis tests is outside the scope of this FEIS/FEIR.</p>
L-029.01	Alan Swanson	<p>Having stated those facts, I still very much have been looking forward to the convenience of passenger rail to my home town. I am an avid, if not rabid sports fan, and would love to ride the train to BOSTON in order to attend a BRUINS, CELTICS, OR RED SOX game, and visit the MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, or the PUBLIC GARDENS.</p> <p>There are many more people in the area that would like to do the same.</p> <p>Although we would not necessarily need the train to commute to work, it would still be very much appreciated to do so for recreation!</p> <p>I attended the public comment meeting at KEITH JR. HIGH and would like to add my voice to all the others that feel that the proposed line through STOUGHTON and an electric train are most definitely the best options and should be approved NOW!</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-055.01	Grant Taylor	I am writing to you today to strongly oppose the Stoughton Branch Alternative to extend commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River. The area that the proposed line is going through is the most environmentally sensitive of any of the other proposals. It must be built through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC as well as the Pine Swamp with its many species of endangered animals. The disruption to their habitat during and after construction would cause great harm and permanently affect their ability to survive. There are 63 wetlands located along the Easton right-of-way according to the DEIS report. These areas are under conservation protection now from harmful development. I don't understand how we can allow this area to be compromised by a commuter rail service when there are other alternatives that are less environmentally damaging.	The environmental issues cited in the comment were addressed in the FEIS/FEIR.
E-055.02	Grant Taylor	Another concern I have is the drinking water impact this service could have. Many of Easton's wells are located near the proposed rail line. A fuel spill near any of these well sites would have a devastating impact on the drinking water supply to the town. The rail line also crosses over the Canoe River Aquifer that supplies clean drinking water to many towns in Southeastern Massachusetts. We should be protecting the drinking water supplies of the area instead of introducing a potential source of destruction to this valuable resource.	Water resource impacts were addressed in Chapter 4.17, no significant impacts on drinking water supplies are anticipated with the mitigation measures incorporated in the project. Only the Whittenton Alternative alignment is located within 400' of an existing Zone 1 drinking water supply.
E-055.03	Grant Taylor	I believe the Rapid Express Bus Service to Boston would have the least environmental impact at the least cost and still provide the benefit to the New Bedford and Fall River residents that this study addresses. Any of the alternatives, other than Stoughton Extension, would have less environmentally damaging impacts.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-068.01	Victoria Taylor	I am strongly against the proposed Stoughton Branch Alternative commuter Rail Service. It is my understanding Easton provides a lot of its own water via wells located in Easton. This is a fragile system and may not be able to withstand the burden of a rail line with trains going through the wetlands repeatedly. The pollution from operating a train as well as the possibility of contamination with a train derailment leave this very sensitive area at risk.	Water resources impacts and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 4/17.
L-027.01	Rebecca Turley	<p>I am writing to make you aware of my strong opposition to the proposed South Coast Rail project utilizing the Stoughton route. My concerns about this project are numerous. I am a resident of Easton and if this route is selected the trains would run through my yard. My husband and I live in Easton with our two young children. Obviously, my biggest concern is with regard to safety. If the Stoughton route is utilized the train will run just feet from my house posing a significant safety concern for my children and other children in the area.</p> <p>My concern about safety includes the children and also the many animals that live in this area. Enclosed please find a picture of what I think is a beaver home located in our woods. I have also seen rabbits, deer, turkey, a spotted salamander, rabbits, fox, coyote, turtles just to name a few. Clearly these animals will all be at risk if the train runs through this area.</p>	Portions of the right-of-way would be fenced in developed areas to discourage unauthorized access. Impacts on wildlife habitat were considered in Chapter 4.14.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-027.02	Rebecca Turley	<p>In addition to safety, my second concern is that it will diminish our quality of life. My husband and I moved to Easton because we were drawn to the beautiful open spaces. We purchased a home on 5 acres of land situated between two golf courses. We are often outside enjoying the beautiful views and peaceful sounds. The sounds we typically hear are from the woodpeckers that live in the woods, other animals that live on the property and the occasional golfer on the golf course yelling "fore". This peacefulness would be replaced by the frequent sound of trains at all hours. Instead of looking out and enjoying the beauty the woods offer many of the trees would be gone replaced with train tracks and trains. We were also drawn specifically to Easton because of the history. Some of that history is also in jeopardy if the train runs though Easton.</p>	<p>Visual impacts and noise impacts were addressed in the EIS/EIR. The proposed operating plan is provided in Chapter 3, trains would not be operating at all hours.</p>
L-027.03	Rebecca Turley	<p>My third concern is regarding cost. As a taxpayer, I am concerned about the astronomical cost this project would incur. Based on the studies I have seen, the benefit does not seem to justify the cost particularly in this economy. The projected ridership seems extremely low and that was based on studies which are very outdated. Since there appears to be a trend of companies moving out of the city and more people working remotely it is my guess that those low numbers are even lower.</p> <p>I have attended many meetings over the years regarding this project. It appears that there are much better options from a safety and cost perspective. It is my hope that you will consider one of these other alternatives for extending service. Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns regarding this project.</p>	<p>Cost was among the considerations in evaluating the alternatives, as discussed in Chapter 3. Updated ridership information is provided in the FEIS/FEIR.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-084.01	Erdem Ural	<p>I have examined the above captioned report. In my professional opinion, the DEIR/DEIS is inadequate because it does not evaluate the project in light of all specific factors required by 33 CFR 320.4(a)(1), which states:</p> <p>“All factors which may be relevant to the proposal must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof: among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.” (Emphasis Added.)</p>	<p>The NEPA factors relevant to this project were evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR. The commenter correctly identifies the factors that are pertinent to the Corps' Public Interest Review, which is a separate and distinct process from the FEIS requirements under NEPA. The commenter has not identified any specific public interest factor which was not adequately addressed. The Corps' Public Interest Review will be completed prior to the Corps' Record of Decision for this project.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-084.02	Erdem Ural	<p>I also find it disturbing that the DEIR/DEIS, without any explanation or justification, limits its scope to the construction stage of the project and ignores the serious environmental and public safety hazards which will emerge during the operations of the passenger and particularly freight trains.</p> <p>Proper consequence analyses as well as past accident experience reveal that operational risks or consequences can be so high, they may alter or even dominate the ranking of the alternatives considered in this project. Yet, the current version of the DEIR/DEIS implicitly and categorically ignores these known hazards and known potential consequences.</p> <p>For example, accidents such as the puncture of a tank wagon by collision or derailment, and failure and mal-operation of the tank wagon equipment can lead to a catastrophic loss of containment of toxic, radioactive, polluting, flammable or combustible material such as chlorine, LPG, and even diesel fuel. Resulting spills can get into ground water, poison or burn the public, pollute the atmosphere, or create flammable clouds capable of posing flash fire, Vapor Cloud Explosion, BLEVE, blast and jet fire hazards to public and property. Transport of condensed materials such as fertilizer presents special explosion hazards similar to that of TNT or C4, especially when these materials are mixed with diesel fuel.</p>	<p>The environmental impact statement considered both construction and long-term operation impacts. At-grade safety issues are addressed in Chapter 4.1.</p> <p>Freight would continue to operate along segments where it already exists. Therefore, the project would not increase freight accident risks (the risk would remain the same as the existing condition).</p>
L-084.03	Erdem Ural	<p>Before it can reasonably be deemed adequate, the report, at the least, must evaluate the consequences of the above-mentioned scenarios. It must also consider potential impacts all other scenarios and all different material releases experienced during previous incidents. For your consideration, I have attached summaries of selected accidents in the annex.</p>	<p>No freight train usage of the Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road in Taunton is planned or anticipated at this time. Freight would continue to operate along segments where it already exists. Therefore, the project would not increase freight accident risks (the risk would remain the same as the existing condition). Further analysis of hazardous materials release scenarios is not warranted.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-085.01	Wendy Van Dyke	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that I am completely opposed to the expansion of the commuter rail line via the proposed Stoughton alternative. My reasons are listed below:</p> <p>Impacts on Natural Environments/Habitats</p> <p>First and foremost, the irrevocable damage to the Hockomock Swamp, an Atlantic White Cedar swamp and Area of Critical Environmental Concern, (ACEC), is completely unacceptable. The DCR names it as the largest vegetated freshwater wetland system in Massachusetts, with outstanding natural resource qualities and one of the most extensive inland wildlife habitats in southeastern MA, all of which qualify the Hockomock as BioMap Core Habitat. It contains rare acid fen plant wetland communities and is listed by the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, (NHESP) as a Priority Natural Community.</p> <p>A minimum of 34 vernal pools lie along the proposed Stoughton route, all of which have obligate species and are certified or certifiable. Although the route would follow an existing rail bed and utilize a MA DOT right of way, that rail bed has not been used in over 50 years and is at points virtually indiscernible from the surrounding swamp and forest. The new line would fragment the Hockomock, an environmental problem with its own consequences: "Habitat fragmentation is among the most important of all threats to global biodiversity and 'edge effects'---diverse physical and biotic alterations associated with the artificial boundaries of fragments---are dominant drivers of change in many fragmented landscapes. Edge effects can have serious impacts on species diversity</p>	<p>Direct and indirect impacts to the resources cited in the comment were considered in the FEIS/FEIR and conceptual mitigation plans developed where appropriate.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>and composition, community dynamics and ecosystem functioning.”1 Routing a rail line through the Hockomock would severely impact and quite possibly destroy its unique and valuable qualities that have been recognized thus far, and which should afford it protection under numerous state and federal laws. The Hockomock is not the only ACEC which the Stoughton line would fragment: the Fowl Meadow/Ponkapoag Bog area, the Canoe River Aquifer and the Three-Mile River area would be traversed as well. What is the point of designating ACEC’s if not for protection?</p>	
L-085.02	Wendy Van Dyke	<p><b>Water Resource Impacts</b></p> <p>The Stoughton alternative would carry trains within the protection Zone II of five of Easton’s public wells. (Zone I is a 100 ft. – 400 ft. radius around a wellhead and Zone II comprises an area of an aquifer beyond Zone I that contributes water to a well.) The Stoughton line would pass just 500 ft. west of Easton Well #1. Thus construction impacts and storm water discharge, (significant if a diesel train line is built), would also be present just 500 ft. away from this well, approximately 1,600 ft. and 2,000 ft. away from Wells #4 and #2, respectively, and somewhat further from Wells #3 and #5. This isa grave risk to Easton’s water supply and thus, public health, and should not be a risk that is taken.</p>	<p>With incorporation of the mitigation measures discussed in Chapter 4.17, no adverse impacts to water supply wells are anticipated.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-085.03	Wendy Van Dyke	<p>Economics/Feasibility</p> <p>As if the environmental cost is not enough, the financial cost of the South Coast Rail project is currently estimated at over \$2 billion. As MA residents have seen with the Big Dig, projected costs are often far lower than the final, actual cost in dollars. The ridership estimates have been and remain controversial, laden with assumptions that passengers would flock to the new line instead of using existing routes, as well as assumptions that enough passengers would pay the train fare and parking fees for the new route to make it economically viable. Neither the Commonwealth, nor the MBTA, nor we the taxpayers can afford this fiscally irresponsible project.</p>	<p>Cost was among the considerations in the evaluation of alternatives presented in Chapter 3. However, project finance issues are outside the scope of the FEIS/FEIR.</p>
L-085.04	Wendy Van Dyke	<p>Town Safety/Character</p> <p>Seven grade-level crossings in Easton would substantially impact this small town in terms of safety and effects on historical buildings and on neighborhoods. Each crossing poses a threat to children and a delay to emergency vehicles trying to reach nearby hospitals and/or people in need of police, fire or medical assistance. The trains on the Stoughton alternative would pass within 25 ft. of historic buildings not built to withstand the vibrations, potentially damaging or destroying them. By passing within 25 ft. – 50 ft. of some neighborhoods and businesses, the rail line would negatively alter the overall character of this town, something residents have fought to preserve over many years of development.</p>	<p>Delay impacts at grade crossings and public safety at grade crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.1.</p> <p>No vibration damage impacts to historic buildings are expected, see Chapters 4.7 and 4.8. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of both passenger and freight railroads in the past.</p>
L-085.05	Wendy Van Dyke	<p>In short, this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should NOT issue permits for the Stoughton alternative.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
E-045.01	Catherine Voci	<p>This letter is intended to act as notice for the record that for the reasons listed below I am completely against the expansion of the commuter rail and additional freight line proposed by MASSDOT via the proposed Stoughton Alternative.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-045.02	Catherine Voci	Cost - the 2\$ Billion dollar plus cost of the project fails to cost/benefit analysis	Cost was among the considerations in the evaluation of alternatives presented in Chapter 3. Formal cost-benefit or cost effectiveness analysis is not required by CEQ or USACE NEPA regulations. Cost benefit analysis is similarly not required under MEPA. Therefore, determining whether the project passes cost/benefit analysis tests is outside the scope of this FEIS/FEIR.
E-045.03	Catherine Voci	Feasibility – it’s unlikely the line would see enough passengers from New Bedford or Fall River willing to pay \$275 - \$300 plus parking to ride a train for a minimum of 1 hour 15 minutes each way for a job in Boston, or vice versa. Moreover, the ridership analysis is flawed, as it assumes people in Mansfield, Attleboro, Lakeville and Middleborough will take the new line instead of a train that leaves from their own town.	The ridership modeling was conducted by CTPS, an agency with appropriate technical expertise in travel demand modeling using a regional model that has been accepted by FHWA/FTA as appropriate for supporting regional transportation conformity determinations required under the Clean Air Act. The modeling does not assume all people in towns with existing service would shift to new stations in other towns. The model estimates the mode and route choice of each area based on the estimated travel time/cost for a particular trip.
E-045.04	Catherine Voci	Environment – Trains are an environmentally unfriendly mode of transportation. The Commonwealth should not be investing billions of dollars in a fossil fuel technology that moves people from one point to another. Jobs are moving into the suburbs, and more people are telecommuting. The proposed train will harm drinking water supplies, flood storage, and wildlife habitat, and will bisect a nationally renowned Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).	The environmental issues raised by the comment were thoroughly considered in the environmental review process and mitigation measures developed, as appropriate. Both diesel and electric commuter rail alternatives were considered.
E-045.05	Catherine Voci	Well Water Impact – The Commonwealth’s preferred route takes the train within the Zone I of one of Easton’s most productive wells. This is an unacceptable risk.	With mitigation and drainage features in place, the build alternatives are not expected to impair any surface or groundwater resources, including public water supplies. See Chapter 4.17.
E-045.06	Catherine Voci	7 traffic crossings - these crossings provide a safety risk for children and traffic and a major noise and vibration disturbance.	Traffic impacts of at-grade crossings were addressed in Chapter 4.1, in addition to information on safety and incident risks. Horn noise impacts associated with at-grade crossings were addressed in Chapter 4.6.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-045.07	Catherine Voci	Historical Areas and building compromised – the proposed train route will come within less than 25 feet of historic building that are not built to withstand the vibration and will be damaged or destroyed.	As discussed in Chapter 4.8, vibration analyses for each of the diesel and electric alternatives indicate that the vibration levels from train pass-bys are below the threshold to cause structural damage to surrounding buildings or structures. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of functioning passenger and/or freight railroads in the past.
E-045.08	Catherine Voci	Dividing the town impedes Police/Fire/Ambulance access to people in need, and route to closest hospital is severed as well. The MBTA already runs in a deficit in excess of \$130 million dollars, this line would only add to that. There are neighborhoods and businesses along route that come within 25 – 50 feet of train passing.	Delay caused by at-grade crossings was considered and mitigation developed to address adverse impacts (see Chapter 4.1). With mitigation incorporated, no measurable change in emergency response times is anticipated.
E-045.09	Catherine Voci	The bottom line is despite the marketing by the DOT this project is contrary to public interest and the Army Corps of Engineers should not issue the permit for the Stoughton alternative even if ultimately that results in the No Action Alternative. The Rapid Bus is clearly the LEDPA and a more fiscally responsible project.	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p> <p>USACE has not yet made a public interest determination for the project, but will do so prior to the permit decision. Section 3.3.4 concludes there is no alternative to the Stoughton Electric Alternative that would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, and also does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences.</p>
E-056.01	Joel Weber II	<p>On May 25, 2008, a 5 year old boy rode his bike around the crossing gates at Oak Island Road in Revere after an MBTA train cleared the crossing. Shortly after this train passed, another MBTA train came in the opposite direction on the second track, which killed the boy.</p> <p>While education may be effective at reducing accidents like this, I am concerned that education will never be 100% effective, and the numerous at grade crossings that the South Coast rail project proposes to convert to double track at grade crossings create numerous additional opportunities for an accident similar to the May 25, 2008 accident to recur.</p>	At-grade safety issues, including quantitative analysis, is provided in Chapter 4.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-056.02	Joel Weber II	<p>I believe the South Coast Rail FEIS/FEIR should explain in better detail what purpose reverse-peak service will serve in the South Coast Rail operating pattern.</p> <p>Broadly speaking, reverse-peak service can be useful for repositioning equipment, and for carrying passengers who are making a reverse commute.</p>	<p>The South Coast Rail operating plan proposes peak period service of approximately 30 minute service headways on both the Fall River Secondary and the New Bedford Main Line and a 18 minute headway on the trunk (shared) portion of the route north of Myricks Junction. The operating plan proposes off peak and reverse peak direction service of approximately three hour headways on both the Fall River Secondary and the New Bedford Main Line and ninety minute headway on the trunk portion of the route. The proposed off peak and reverse peak service is provided for passengers making a reverse commute, and to reposition equipment for off peak service.</p>
E-056.03	Joel Weber II	<p>Because of the length of the trip from the South Coast to Boston, the Fall River and New Bedford lines will probably have few opportunities for trainsets to make two peak direction trips during a peak period.</p>	<p>Due to the difference in frequency of the peak and reverse peak service, as well as the long trip between South Coast and Boston, no trainsets make two peak direction trips during one peak period.</p>
E-056.04	Joel Weber II	<p>The trip to Fall River will be slightly faster; the table on page 4.1-70 should be updated in the FEIS/FEIR to explain what the Fall River travel times will be for the various alternatives.</p> <p>The table on page 4.1-70 should also be revised to list estimated times via Middleboro with both diesel and electric alternatives if enough track capacity were available. For example, this would be helpful in understanding if mid-day service that would carry tourists from Battleship Cove in Fall River to the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy could be practical.</p>	<p>Travel times for both New Bedford and Fall River trains are provided in FEIS/FEIR Table 3.2-6.</p> <p>The Middleboro Alternatives were eliminated prior to the DEIS/DEIR, see the Phase I Alternatives Analysis report (Appendix 3.1-A).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response																						
E-056.05	Joel Weber II	<p>The FEIS/FEIR should be revised to include a complete proposed schedule based upon a plausible set of stations, showing the times at each of those stations, and indicating where reverse-peak trains which have value in repositioning rolling stock to enable that rolling stock to make two peak direction trips in a single peak period will need to meet peak direction trains. This would also be helpful in giving readers a sense of the travel time between each station pair on each route.</p>	<p>Station to station and travel times are provided below.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Station to Station</th><th>Travel Time (minutes)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Battleship Cove to Fall River Depot</td><td>0:03</td></tr><tr><td>Fall River Depot to Freetown</td><td>0:07</td></tr><tr><td>Freetown to Taunton Depot</td><td>0:11</td></tr><tr><td>Whale's Tooth to King's Highway</td><td>0:05</td></tr><tr><td>King's Highway to Taunton Depot</td><td>0:13</td></tr><tr><td>Taunton Depot to Taunton</td><td>0:05</td></tr><tr><td>Taunton to Raynham</td><td>0:06</td></tr><tr><td>Raynham to Easton Village</td><td>0:06</td></tr><tr><td>Easton Village to North Easton</td><td>0:04</td></tr><tr><td>North Easton to Stoughton</td><td>0:04</td></tr></tbody></table>	Station to Station	Travel Time (minutes)	Battleship Cove to Fall River Depot	0:03	Fall River Depot to Freetown	0:07	Freetown to Taunton Depot	0:11	Whale's Tooth to King's Highway	0:05	King's Highway to Taunton Depot	0:13	Taunton Depot to Taunton	0:05	Taunton to Raynham	0:06	Raynham to Easton Village	0:06	Easton Village to North Easton	0:04	North Easton to Stoughton	0:04
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E-056.06	Joel Weber II	<p>Because the value of reverse-peak trips for equipment positioning will be minimal in the South Coast Rail system, a thorough study of passenger demand for reverse-peak service would be a valuable thing to include in the FEIS/FEIR. This study should look at whether reverse-peak bus service would a feasible alternative to reverse-peak rail service, as the roads may be less congested in the reverse-peak direction than the peak direction, and reverse-peak ridership may not justify the costs associated with constructing a second track or running a nearly empty diesel hauled train.</p> <p>Providing minimal or no reverse-peak service may also be beneficial in reducing the number of times the crossing gates close during peak commute times, thus reducing the impact of the South Coast Rail project on local traffic.</p>	<p>Bus service was considered, but is not a practicable alternative due to the limited highway corridor capacity. Please see Chapter 3, and Analysis of South Coast Rail Alternatives: Phase 1 Report, Appendix 3.1-A, for a discussion of project alternatives.</p>																						

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-056.07	Joel Weber II	The FEIS/FEIR should also be revised to explore what infrastructure would be needed to operate all peak direction South Coast Rail service via Stoughton, with all reverse-peak service needed for any equipment repositioning operated via the Middleboro Line.	Through Middleborough, was not considered practicable due to its low projected ridership numbers, high cost and significant construction-related disruption to the existing public transit system and to the City of Quincy. The Middleborough Full Alternative would also add multiple trains in the morning and evening peaks to South Station operations, resulting in operational impacts at South Station similar to those discovered at a later stage in the alternatives analysis for the Attleboro Alternative, resulting in extensive delays to the operation of the alternative and system-wide impacts to the rail network. The operational impacts would render the Middleborough Full Alternative not practicable for this reason as well.
E-056.08	Joel Weber II	I recognize that some of these upgrades are in areas with significant freight traffic, and/or Amtrak Downeaster service; but if the MBTA were to commit to double tracking the entire length of the route from South Station to where the Plymouth/Kingston Line diverges from the Middleboro Line, what impact would that have on making Middleboro Line capacity available for some South Coast rail trains, especially reverse-peak South Coast Rail trains?	Using the Middleboro Line was considered, but the Middleboro Alternatives were eliminated prior to the DEIS/DEIR, see the Phase I Alternatives Analysis report.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-056.09	Joel Weber II	<p>If there is a need for double tracking to allow reverse-peak trains to pass peak direction trains on the Stoughton route, the area from Bridge St in Taunton to Foundry St in Easton appears to be a relatively long stretch free of crossings. The FEIS/FEIR should clearly explain whether a schedule could be developed which would make this the primary passing location for reverse-peak trains, assuming flexibility in scheduling operations at South Station and the potential for adjustments to schedules on other lines. In particular, it may be desirable to fix the schedule of those trainsets which will complete a peak direction trip, a reverse-peak trip, and a second peak direction trip during a single peak period first, and then adjust the schedule of any trainsets that will only be able to make a single peak direction trip during a peak period to put the meets where they can minimize the need for additional double track, especially at grade level crossings.</p>	<p>The specific area in question does not support double tracking because it passes through the Pine Swamp and impacts needed to be minimized. Areas of double tracking occur in the form of station sidings and passing sidings to accommodate moves.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-056.10	Joel Weber II	<p>For any at grade crossing, the FEIS/FEIR should include an estimate of the cost and impacts of a grade separation, to justify not using a grade separation.</p> <p>The FEIS/FEIR should have a table exploring costs of grade crossings vs. grade separations. This table should have one line for each crossing between Canton Junction and Fall River / New Bedford, as well as a line at the bottom with grand totals. It should have columns for estimated cost for crossing gates, paving, etc. if the crossing is built at grade, estimated cost to construct a grade separated crossing, estimated deaths and injuries per year, ten years, or hundred years if built as a level crossing, estimated average annual property damage cost from accidents if built as a level crossing, estimated total hours each year spent waiting at that crossing (number of people waiting times average time spent waiting), and estimated lost wages from the time wasted waiting at the crossing.</p> <p>The FEIS/FEIR should also list the estimated number of people who will travel on the road each day at each crossing, and the number of people who will travel in passenger trains through each crossing each day, and provide a comparison to the number of people who travel on the least heavily traveled portion of the Interstate Highway system. As the entire Interstate Highway system is fully grade separated, this will help readers of the FEIS/FEIR to understand whether any claimed unaffordability of any potential grade separation in the South Coast Rail project is consistent with historical federal expenditures.</p>	<p>Grade separation was considered and is proposed at Route 138, all other locations not considered as it is not practicable. See Chapter 4.1 for details concerning grade crossings (existing conditions and proposed improvements). A cost-benefit type analysis of at-grade compared to grade separated crossings is not required under NEPA or MEPA.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
E-056.11	Joel Weber II	<p>The FEIS/FEIR should discuss the feasibility of using the ALP45-DP locomotive in South Coast Rail service. Both New Jersey Transit and Montreal's AMT have placed orders for these locomotives, which use overhead catenary power where it is available, and diesel engines otherwise. This might improve travel times, lower emissions, and reduce the cost of energy for the Canton Junction to South Station portion of the Fall River / New Bedford trips, while at the same time reducing the infrastructure costs relative to installing catenary along the entire route.</p> <p>(I suspect the substation(s) feeding power to the Providence Line's existing overhead wires might need to be upgraded to handle a higher wattage than they currently do if the MBTA were to start drawing power from those wires, and negotiation with Amtrak over how to divide the electric bill would obviously be required.)</p> <p>The FEIS/FEIR should also explore the feasibility of using an ALP45-DP with a modification to remove one of its two 2100 horsepower Caterpillar diesel generators, and replacing it with several Tesla Roadster style battery packs of a total weight similar to one of those 2100 horsepower diesel generators.</p> <p>The FEIS/FEIR should spell out how much weight would be saved by removing one of those 2100 horsepower diesels, how many kilowatts the diesel(s) in a 4200 horsepower locomotive produce at full throttle, how many kilowatts the diesel generator(s) are expected to produce on average during the Canton Junction to Fall River / New Bedford portion of the run at the actual throttle settings that would be used, and how many kilowatt hours can be stored in a set of several Tesla Roadster battery packs that weigh as much as a single 2100 horsepower diesel.</p> <p><a href="http://www.teslamotors.com/display_data/TeslaRoadsterBatterySystem.pdf">http://www.teslamotors.com/display_data/TeslaRoadsterBatterySystem.pdf</a> has some specifications on the battery pack used in a Tesla Roadster, though it would also be good to</p>	<p>There is no practicable alternative that is less environmentally damaging than the Stoughton Electric alternative, for the entire length of the proposed commuter rail service.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		<p>solicit information about the battery packs used in the Nissan Leaf, Ford Focus Electric, and Chevy Volt.</p> <p>I am under the impression that removing one of the two diesels from an ALP45-DP may remove a weight equal to enough Tesla Roadster battery packs to store the full output of the two diesel generators for about a half hour.</p> <p>While the Canton Junction to New Bedford run is nearly an hour, I suspect that a diesel would not be run at full power for the vast majority of the run, and moreover, with batteries, regenerative braking may be more effective than on a simple diesel. This implies that a battery pack replacing one of the two diesels might last significantly more than a half hour; depending on how the numbers work, such a battery pack might be able to cover the entire trip from Canton Junction to New Bedford.</p> <p>(Regenerative braking might still be possible without batteries if the braking energy is used for lighting, heating, and air conditioning in the coaches; the FEIS/FEIR should comment on whether the diesel alternatives will offer this sort of regenerative braking.)</p> <p>Additionally, the ALP45-DP used by New Jersey Transit has a main transformer that can operate on the 25 hz power used in New Jersey.</p> <p>The catenary Amtrak uses in Massachusetts is a newer design that uses 60 hz power, and my understanding is that a transformer which can run only on 60 Hz power will be smaller and lighter than one which can also handle 25 Hz power. I believe the FEIS/FEIR should clearly state the weight of the 25 Hz main transformer in an NJT ALP45-DP, and the weight that could be saved with a 60 Hz only transfer, along with mention of how many additional kilowatt hours of batteries might be carried by taking advantage of that weight savings.</p>	

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
		I assume that with a catenary / battery / diesel hybrid locomotive, installing substations and overhead wires at the terminal stations at Fall River and New Bedford (and potentially Forge Park/495 and Needham Heights) and overnight and mid-day layover facilities would be desirable.	
E-056.12	Joel Weber II	<p>I believe that battery prices have the potential to come down rapidly over the next several years, as automakers build more and more cars like the Tesla Model S, the Nissan Leaf, and the Ford Focus Electric. There may be a significant change in the economic feasibility of a battery powered commuter rail locomotive today vs. when the South Coast Rail project finally is ready to have rolling stock delivered.</p> <p>I hope that 10-15 years from now, commuters will not be in the difficult position of needing to choose between riding a diesel powered commuter train using a locomotive that is less than halfway through its useful life (and which MBTA fare payers and Massachusetts taxpayers are less than halfway through paying off the bonds for) or driving a zero emissions automobile on a highway that Massachusetts taxpayers might prefer to avoid paying to widen.</p>	Both electric and diesel options for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives are evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
L-025.01	Steven Wilkinson	<p>It requires the most construction and disruption with potentially adverse environmental impact. I ask you to re-consider the alternatives and move to use as much existing infrastructure, through the Attleborough or Middleborough alternatives, as possible, at least, to test the theory that rail service to New Bedford is warranted before engaging in massive construction.</p> <p>Furthermore, the announced justification for this project is passenger rail service. If passenger service is not the real reason for this expansion, that should be stated so that the citizens of the Commonwealth can truthfully evaluate whether they want this expansion before investing vast sums of taxpayer funds on a rail line that may not be significantly used by the passengers for which it is being justified.</p>	Using existing infrastructure was considered, as were the Attleboro and Middleboro Alternatives. See Chapter 3. The purpose and need for the project is stated in Chapter 2.
E-023.01	Rosemary Zehntner	<p>I am writing in support of the South Coast rail project. It is the intelligent way of the future as gas prices rise and global warming continues.</p> <p>The project would clearly benefit the Greater New Bedford area. However, I also believe there will be substantial benefit to the greater Boston area as well as Cape Cod &amp; the Islands. Think about the possibility of Boston area residents taking a train to New Bedford, then hopping on a ferry to Martha's Vineyard and/or Nantucket without ever getting into a car. This scenario eliminates vast numbers of ferry-bound cars crossing the Cape Cod bridges adding to traffic congestion on the Cape. It would also reduce traffic congestion on the Islands as folks arrive without their cars to use local public transportation which in turn boosts the islands' economies.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
E-023.02	Rosemary Zehntner	I am in support of the shortest, most efficient route from New Bedford to Boston.	Thank you for your comment.

## **Public Hearings**

## Response to Comments on the DEIS/DEIR

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-001.01	Stephen Castellina	We're concerned -- I'm concerned -- we're concerned, the Board of Selectmen, with what the train will do to Berkley, with the noise, smoke, vibration and also the pollutants from the trains.	The environmental issues cited in the comment were addressed in the EIS/EIR.
H-001.02	Stephen Castellina	We are concerned about the effects to the environment, specifically on our drinking water that comes out of all private wells. We don't have public drinking water, and also we're concerned about the effects on animals and on our wetlands. We, in Berkley as well as residents request that any replication -- replication or wetland restoration be within the Town of Berkley and not elsewhere.	The environmental issues cited in the comment were addressed in the EIS/EIR. The rationale for the potential mitigation sites is provided in Chapter 4.16.
H-001.03	Stephen Castellina	We support our fellow towns in opposition to commuter rail trains through our towns. We support the Towns of Stoughton, Raynham, and especially the town which is most environmentally affected, the Town of Easton.	Thank you for your comment.
H-001.04	Stephen Castellina	In my opinion, the argument for equality of rail service between Boston and all cities within 60 miles of Boston is bogus. Money would be better spent on some less -- on such things as bus improvement or no action; and the rest of the money that you spend -- that you would spend with no action or with bus improvement should be spent on bringing businesses to Southeastern Massachusetts, and then people won't have to travel to Boston.	Spending funds on other things (such as direct economic investment) is an alternative outside the scope of this EIS/EIR because it would not address the purpose and need for the project.
H-001.05	Stephen Castellina	We also feel that if -- if this train goes through, that people just -- if any people are taken off the roads by train, what's going to happen is it will free up 24 a little bit more, and it will be just as crowded as it is today.	Shifts in the travel patterns of drivers (including shifts from one roadway to another in response to changes in congestion) are accounted for in the CTPS regional transportation model.
H-001.06	Stephen Castellina	I noticed one thing about the bus slide that was shown by the MBTA, they told about the price of the bus, but underneath it when they said trains, they didn't say the cost of trains, which is -- which is, you know, more than double the price of the bus.	The comment does not appear to pertain to the EIS/EIR. Information on the cost of the bus and rail alternatives was appropriately disclosed.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-001.07	Stephen Castellina	We'd also like to consider the fact that more people work from home nowadays and more people will continue to do this in the future, and there might be no need at all to go to Boston.	Socioeconomic trends such as working from home are considered in the CTPS regional transportation model. Such trends are not expected to completely eliminate home-work travel as suggested by the comment.
H-001.08	Stephen Castellina	We'd like to have -- as I said before, we'd like the money spent on bringing business to Southeast Massachusetts, and that will also decrease the amount of traffic and need people in cars.	Spending funds on other things (such as direct economic investment) is an alternative outside the scope of this EIS/EIR because it would not address the purpose and need for the project.
H-001.09	Stephen Castellina	Otherwise, when they talk about the equality for New Bedford and Fall River, the other lines don't disrupt and go through environmentally sensitive areas like the Hockomock Swamp. As Ms. Egan said, all wetlands are not equal, and we want the Army Corps of Engineers to consider that. Trestles and these things you're talking about seems like it's going to make quite an impact to that environmentally sensitive area, which is unique to Massachusetts.	Impacts on wetlands (direct and indirect) were considered in detail in Chapter 4.16.
H-001.10	Stephen Castellina	I leave you with one other -- one word that I think -- this is my personal opinion about this whole thing. It's a boondoggle. That's what it is. It may be a better description than boondoggle, this is a \$2 billion boondoggle. I know the Corps of Engineers probably doesn't particularly care how much it costs, but, please, do what you can as Army Corps of Engineers to -- to either look at the bus alternative, spend a little bit of money; it may take a few cars off the road or do a no alternative.	The Rapid Bus Alternative was carefully considered, but ultimately found to not be practicable (see Chapter 3).
H-002.01	Brad Washburn	The DEIS states that you will develop more specific mitigation measures during the final design process for the LEDPA, and the town will therefore request more specificity regarding -- I'm sorry -- regarding the proposed mitigation commitments for noted impacts to residential properties adjacent to the right-of-way. Impacts to historic districts and properties, particularly those in North Easton Village, impacts to wetland resource areas, namely, in the Hockomock Swamp, traffic-related impacts, and public safety impacts, including but not limited to grade crossings and the town's water supply.	Mitigation measures are summarized in Chapter 7 of the FEIS/FEIR. The commenter is correct that some of these measures will be subject to further refinement in final design.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-002.02	Brad Washburn	I do have a couple of questions I know you can't answer, but just want to pose them for the record. Basically when -- when will the more specific mitigation measures be presented to the public, and in what level of coordination or public input does this process include? Will there be opportunities for the public to comment on things such as station design, traffic improvement projects, locations of sound barriers and ballast mats? I'm assuming it will be during project permitting, but I'm wondering if that's during the final EIS/EIR process.	Several of the mitigation items noted in the comment are available for review in the FEIS/FEIR, including the locations of noise and vibration mitigation measures (Chapters 4.6 and 4.7). Traffic mitigation measures are described in Chapter 4.1.
H-002.03	Brad Washburn	Lastly, in terms of the public comment period for the project, the town did submit a request to extend the public comment period. My understanding is that the federal comment period or the -- the Army Corps of Engineers can accept comments right up until the issuance of the permit, but I think the MEPA process is the constraining factor here; but, again, it's my understanding that the secretary of the EPA can extend the public comment period beyond what is stipulated in the MEPA regulations.	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p> <p>Additional opportunity for public comment will occur during the review period for this FEIS/FEIR.</p>
H-003.01	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	As the representative for the City of Taunton, I'm here to testify on behalf of the city's best interest regarding a rail project. We are pleased that the route preferred by the Mass. DOT is the Stoughton route, as this is also the preferred route of the City of Taunton. We do not support any other route for the South Coast Rail.	Thank you for your comment.
H-003.02	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	We do not support the Whittenton route, as this will result in 14 grade crossings throughout our city, in a very densely populated area, and they are very close together, and that will be a disaster for our traffic flow. It will also cause public safety threats through obviously the potential for emergency vehicles being delayed at those stops.	The potential impacts of at-grade crossings on safety and delay were addressed in Chapter 4.1. The greater potential impact on Taunton under the Whittenton Alternatives compared to the Stoughton Alternatives is acknowledged.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-003.03	State Representative Shaunna O'Connell	The city has already acquired property on Arlington Street that abuts the site of the proposed downtown station, and we understand that the state is going to examine our ability to support a train station there. It is anticipated that the state would assist the city in making improvements around the Dean Street/Arlington Street intersections.	The Taunton Station was studied in the EIS/EIR.
H-004.01	Colleen Corona	I'd like to go on record as stating that the Town of Easton does not support the Stoughton Alternative. We have many significant concerns. First of all, we feel that the environmental impacts are significant, particularly to the Hockomock Swamp.	Impacts to Hockomock Swamp have been addressed throughout the EIS/EIR and mitigation incorporated, most importantly the proposed trestle.
H-004.02	Colleen Corona	Easton is a town that relies solely on wells for their water, and a train is scheduled to pass by several of those wells, one in very close proximity to the wells, so we have significant concerns about our drinking water.	No adverse impacts on water supplies are anticipated with the incorporation of the mitigation measures described in Chapter 4.17.
H-004.03	Colleen Corona	We have public safety concerns, as every community has, that the train's going to pass through. We're also concerned about our historic resources. North Easton and South Easton have significant historic resources, and particularly in North Easton, the train will pass very, very close to those historic resources and also through several densely populated areas.	Cultural resource impacts were addressed in Chapter 4.8.
H-004.04	Colleen Corona	And lastly, I'd like to -- just like to reiterate that the Hockomock Swamp is an area of critical importance, and I'd like to reiterate our concern about the train passing through that and once again state that we do not support the Stoughton Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-005.01	Charles Crowley	<p>My name is Charles Crowley. I'm the Mayor of the City of Taunton, and I'm very enthusiastically in support of rail service coming to the South Coast region, and I am very much in favor of the direct Stoughton route.</p> <p>It is the most economical way to get to Boston, to Fall River. Everyone keeps talking about what it means for us to be able to get to Boston, but I think we have qualities in the South Coast region to make people from Boston want to come here.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-005.02	Charles Crowley	But the south -- the direct Stoughton route is something where it goes through the Hockomock Swamp. It's been doing that. The rail service was established through there about 170 years ago, and we had far more detrimental locomotives going through the Hockomock Swamp during that period of time causing much more havoc; yet, the Hockomock Swamp is thriving. We're going to have much more economically friendly engines that are going to be going through that area.	Thank you for your comment.
H-005.03	Charles Crowley	And I think having that direct route coming down to Taunton, by the stations that already were in Easton and in Raynham, and the Dean Street station is the downtown station for Taunton. It's a -- one of two transit-oriented districts that we're created to try to enhance the economic opportunities around that corridor that lead to the -- to the development of this project.	Thank you for your comment.
H-005.04	Charles Crowley	The Whittenton Alternative we're very much opposed to that. The community has gone on record many times, and it has 14 grade crossings. It will devastate the downtown area as will the Attleboro route because they cross through our downtown area, and the streets are so close together that one particular train could really block off many of the public safety vehicles that would interact and bring safety to our community, the way we're all spread out, 50 square miles. It's very, very difficult for -- should that train dissect the city in that area.	The impacts of at-grade crossings were evaluated in Chapter 4.1 and greater impact of the Whittenton Alternatives on at-grade crossings Taunton relative to the Stoughton Alternatives acknowledged in the alternatives analysis.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-005.05	Charles Crowley	<p>There's 14 grade crossings. The direct Stoughton route has only five at grade crossings.</p> <p>The Attleboro route cuts through what is the area of -- the three-mile river area of critical environmental concern that was established several years ago. So in order to do that, you're cutting through an environmentally friendly area that has 15 grade crossings that will dissect the city.</p>	<p>There were would be four at-grade crossings in Taunton under Stoughton Alternatives, compared to 12 active public crossings under the Whittenton Alternatives. See Chapter 4.1.</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.</p>
H-005.06	Charles Crowley	<p>We have been a railroad center for years. We've had ten railroad stations all operating at the same time. So it's something we welcome, Taunton being the gateway to the South Coast, and we applaud those who supported the direct Stoughton route because that is the way we can once again have a rail service, return rail service to Southeastern Massachusetts, and that's the best way to go.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
H-006.01	Frank Cook	<p>I and other members of the City Council have appeared at previous hearings involving this project, for example, a few years ago at Norton, and I just wanted to reiterate the concerns that have been raised in the past regarding the Attleboro Alternative still remain of paramount concern to us.</p>	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.</p>
H-006.02	Frank Cook	<p>This evening, although the focus of our meeting tonight is on the environmental impact, I also want to mention some of the safety concerns shared by the -- the City of Attleboro has.</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternative would result in grade crossings over some of the key roads, including Route 123 and other roads that are the major route to Sturdy Memorial Hospital for ambulances, for example.</p> <p>Not to mention a lot of these trains going through at a time when school children, school buses would be on the roads and using some of those -- some of those same roads at this point.</p>	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-006.03	Frank Cook	<p>As is noted during the presentation earlier this evening, the Attleboro Alternative would have the greatest combined environmental impact, and some of the concerns that we have in the past, and these concerns we still have, are items such as noise, vibrations. Mayor Crowley just mentioned the concerns that we share also with regard to the impact on the wetlands.</p> <p>In terms of the noise and vibrations, since Acela began operating through there, we not only have more trains, but there's also for those who are living in the -- along or adjacent to that track area, a tremendous increase in the amount of noise and also in the amount of vibration. So we're very concerned about the potential environmental impact of a project of this nature.</p>	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
H-006.04	Frank Cook	<p>So, again -- again, we continue to be in opposition to the Attleboro Alternative. I'm glad to see some of the cost findings that are coming out tonight as well as some of the environmental comments that were made to indicate that this is not a good choice and would urge the Corps to look very carefully at this.</p> <p>And, again, in terms of the Attleboro Alternative, this does not seem to be the best impact on the environment or making the environment any better.</p> <p>I do want to thank you for the time. Again, just to reiterate, Attleboro continues to be in opposition to the Attleboro Alternative.</p>	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-007.01	Christine Santoro	As planners, we deal with present effects of development as well as future and long-term effects of development, and although we recognize the positive impacts of the railroad being extension -- being extended, there are also negative impacts that require mitigation, and our concern as planners is that we will need mitigation for the early present development, but also in the future because the train will have future impacts through the years. So when we think about mitigation, I would like things to be considered as both present and future mitigation.	Mitigation commitments are summarized in Chapter 7 and include measures that would provide mitigation in the future (an example being noise walls/building sound insulation).
H-007.02	Christine Santoro	<p>Mitigation must directly alleviate some of the negative impacts, not just environmental as -- and as with water or the species involved but also the historic buildings, as has been mentioned before, with the train passing through over time, those buildings will be affected, and down the road we will need mitigation to restore those buildings.</p> <p>There are many beautiful historic buildings in Easton. We have a very tiny village area and many homes near there, and not only will we need sound barriers and trees to protect the homes now but also in the future.</p> <p>We're talking about a 100-year plan here. We need mitigation that takes that into consideration.</p>	Impacts to cultural resources are addressed in Chapter 4.8. Cultural resource mitigation will occur through an Memorandum of Agreement or Programmatic Agreement, which is a legally binding agreement among the federal agency, the SHPO and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer(s), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
H-007.03	Christine Santoro	So the rail will have a continuing impact, and I think that in planning for this, we need mitigation that will continually meet the needs of those impacts and implications into the future.	Mitigation commitments are summarized in Chapter 7 and include measures that would provide mitigation in the future (an example being noise walls/building sound insulation).



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-008.01	Melanie-Jane Deware	<p>The Easton Historical Commission is very much in opposition to the proposed commuter rail service that will go through our town for many reasons, including its negative impact on historic districts and sites.</p> <p>The proposed route will bisect the North Easton Village National Registry District, the Richardson National Landmark District and the Ames local historic district. Its proximity to these districts as well as their associated buildings will cause irreparable harm to them.</p> <p>The project is ill-conceived on many levels, and we feel that history cannot be mitigated.</p>	<p>Historic resource impacts and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 4.8. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of both passenger and freight railroads in the past. Modern, continuously welded railroad track is expected to cause less vibration than was the case for railroad technologies of the past.</p>
H-008.02	Melanie-Jane Deware	<p>The proposed increase in revenue to local towns will not happen. How many people south of Raynham really commute to Boston daily. The Taunton bus that transported folks from Fall River to Boston was canceled due to lack of ridership.</p> <p>Do people from Fall River and New Bedford want to commute an hour and a half each way every day to go to work? A 2009 report based on federal census data showed that only 1.4 percent of the Fall River workforce takes public transportation to work.</p> <p>Are the people who make up their above average unemployment rate qualified for and able to afford the trip to Boston for jobs which don't even exist?</p> <p>And using Brockton as an example, they have three commuter rail stations which all count as mixed used development surrounding them that would magically appear but haven't. Associated data shows that their residents' use of public transportation has not increased since their stations were built in 1997.</p>	<p>The transportation basis for the purpose and need is addressed in Chapters 2 and 4.1. 2010 Census data was incorporated in the ridership modeling updated for the FEIS/FEIR.</p> <p>With respect to Transit Oriented Development, it is recognized that transit access is only one of many factors that influence land development decisions (other factors including economic conditions, local land use regulations, infrastructure, environmental constraints etc.). Development of any particular area cannot be guaranteed or predicted with certainty. Nevertheless, the improved accessibility provided by the project is expected to encourage a greater proportion of future growth to occur in the vicinity of station areas on a regional basis and MassDOT will implement a monitoring and reporting program that will include transit oriented development metrics (see Chapter 5). Development in specific areas/parcels near stations is not guaranteed, but the overall effect of rail transit on land use surrounding stations has been well studied (see Section 4.3.3.1 for summary of literature related to impacts on property values, which is a proxy measure for development potential).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-008.03	Melanie-Jane Deware	There are also a myriad of safety issues regarding grade crossings in Easton, a severe lack of safe and adequate parking, and permanent damage to the Hockomock Swamp to consider as well.	At-grade crossing safety is addressed in Chapter 4.1. The Hockomock Swamp is addressed in several chapters of the FEIS/FEIR, including open space, biodiversity, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species.
H-008.04	Melanie-Jane Deware	We feel that the whole idea is a bad one. Not enough people will use the rail line. It will cause billions that we don't have, funneling money from other pressing needs for repairs to roads and bridges and funding for our schools, and it will create more unfunded maintenance costs.	<p>The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region, and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20.)</p> <p>Funding issues are outside the scope of the EIS/EIR.</p>
H-008.05	Melanie-Jane Deware	Additionally, the damage to local, state, and national historic sites will be devastating. Once our history is gone, it's gone.	Cultural resource impacts and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 4.8.
H-009.01	Heather Graf	<p>We continue to support the re-establishment of commuter rail service to the cities of Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River. The Town of Norton are encouraged by the findings of the Draft EIS.</p> <p>We look forward to the final reports, which should eliminate the Attleboro Alternative from any further consideration for South Coast Rail.</p> <p>Further comments will be submitted in writing.</p>	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
H-010.01	Leonard Flynn	The Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District voted unanimously on April 27, 2011, to commend the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a thorough and objective analysis to the South Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, dated February 2011.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-010.02	Leonard Flynn	<p>SRPEDD supports the analysis in the report of both the transportation and environmental factors associated with the alternatives that were evaluated.</p> <p>We agree that the Stoughton Route provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford, as measured by travel time and ridership. We support the Corps' finding that operational obstacles associated with both the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives would make these alternatives infeasible.</p> <p>The fact that the Stoughton Route is served mostly by trains already in service, as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton Alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-010.03	Leonard Flynn	<p>SRPEDD is also in agreement with the Whittenton Alternative through the City of Taunton poses additional operational problems and should not be considered further.</p> <p>Specifically large number of grade crossings in Taunton will be unnecessarily disruptive and will add to the travel time, thus lowering ridership numbers.</p>	The disadvantages of the Whittenton Alternative noted in the comment were considered in the transportation analyses documented in Chapter 4.1.
H-010.04	Leonard Flynn	<p>SRPEDD further agrees with the analysis of environmental factors, including wetlands, air quality, water resources, et cetera, and supports the conclusion that the Stoughton Route performed best on the measure of environmental impact; that the fact the Stoughton Route follows railbeds that were in use a little over 50 years ago and is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.</p> <p>We are very familiar with the corridor as it passes through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC, and agree with the conclusion that the wetlands impact will be limited, especially if the trestle is constructed. We would further request significant mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-010.05	Leonard Flynn	It should be pointed out there are many factors beyond the present purpose that argue in favor of the project and in favor of the Stoughton Route. These factors include --	Thank you for your comment. (Note- commenter was cut off by moderator at public hearing due to time limit).
H-011.01	Roy Nascimento	<p>The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce remains a strong advocate for the extension of commuter rail service from Boston to New Bedford and other communities in the South Coast region of Massachusetts.</p> <p>The Chamber agrees with the conclusions that identify the Stoughton Alternative as providing the best service to the communities in the South Coast region and providing the least environmental impact.</p> <p>The fact that the Stoughton Route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective.</p> <p>Also, the fact that the Stoughton Route follows railbeds that were in use a little over 50 years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-011.02	Roy Nascimento	<p>We believe the final report should include double tracking the rail lines to provide future capacity and faster service.</p> <p>It is important that any design, permitting, and building of the rail be completed with an eye towards enhancing and expanding the service in the future.</p>	Double tracking is proposed where necessary to meet the needs of this project, increasing capacity to account for future growth was not evaluated. Any potential future proposal to expand track capacity would have to go through the appropriate environmental review processes if the work was not cleared in this EIS/EIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-011.03	Roy Nascimento	<p>In addition, the Chamber also believes that travel time and frequency of service is an important -- are important factors to the success of this project. To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel time from the South Coast to Boston South Station be no more than 70 minutes.</p> <p>Shorter commuting time gives businesses greater access to more workers with specialized skills, while residents of the region gain connectivity to employment opportunities along the Route 128 corridor and the business districts of Boston.</p>	Design refinements to the alternatives included measures to improve travel time, as does the operations plan presented in Chapter 3. In the peak period, the Stoughton Electric Alternative would take 77 minutes to travel from New Bedford to Boston.
H-011.04	Roy Nascimento	<p>We also encourage full service throughout the day to meet demand and encourage ridership, a minimum of three trains in the morning peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak period should be utilized.</p> <p>This includes full weekend service and intercity service between Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River to encourage regional mobility.</p> <p>We'd also like to see a late evening train service to Boston to be considered for residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service would help support our growing tourism economy by connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our national park, our ferry service to Martha's Vineyard and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene in the South Coast.</p>	See Chapter 3 for the proposed operations plan.
H-011.05	Roy Nascimento	<p>The Chamber believes commuter rail extension is critical to economic development and growth in the region and in keeping with long-range smart growth planning strategies that support the environment and encourage development around priority development areas.</p> <p>Commuter rail extension to the South Coast will also help meet existing and future demand for public transportation and enhanced regional mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region by reducing congestion and increasing travel choice.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-012.01	Kyla Bennett	<p>The DEIS has critical errors. For example, incorrect project purpose stated on page 2-2. It has missing documents on which the DEIS relies heavily, like the CTPS January 2011 work trips to Boston memo, and it also has information that's simply not there, information required by the MEPA certificates, like maps and costs of wetland mitigation; hence, I am very cranky.</p>	<p>It is not clear from the comment what incorrect project purpose was stated on page 2-2.</p> <p>The DEIS/DEIR was not required to include every referenced document (such as the CTPS 2011 work trips to Boston memo) as an appendix. Any document referenced in the DEIS/DEIR (or this FEIS/FEIR) must be available to the public on request. The work trips to Boston memo has been included in this FEIS/FEIR as Appendix 2.2-A.</p> <p>Overall project mitigation costs have been updated and are included in the cost estimate presented in Table 3.2-22. The cost estimate includes projected environmental resource mitigation costs consistent with the FTA-approved methodology. Comparative costs of mitigation among the alternatives presented in the DEIS/DEIR were not a discriminating factor in our determination that the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternatives are not practicable. See also the response to Comment No. L-068.37.</p> <p>Maps were included in Volume II of the DEIS/DEIR.</p>
H-012.02	Kyla Bennett	<p>I know the state has been pushing you, Corps, I have heard them push you. Please, don't let their haste result in a shoddy work product or a rush decision. You or EPA can stop the insanity that's going on.</p> <p>The state's own caps analysis states and this is a quote, "The two routes through the Hockomock Swamp showed the greatest estimated loss in ecological integrity." How then can that be the LEDPA? It is not possible. The bus is the LEDPA.</p>	<p>The LEDPA must be practicable and it was concluded that the Rapid Bus Alternative was not practicable. The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-012.03	Kyla Bennett	Even if the Corps were to come to the incorrect conclusion that the Stoughton Alternative is the LEDPA, it is not a permissible project. Bisecting the Hockomock Swamp and the ACEC of national significance and threatening water supplies of a number of municipalities is contrary to the public interest and would cause or contribute to significant degradation of waters of the U.S. contrary to this Clean Water Act 404(b)(1) guidelines. I want to leave you with three important thoughts.	<p>The environmental issues cited in the comment are addressed in the FEIS/FEIR. The subsequent Section 404 permit decision will need to include compliance with the "no significant degradation" provision, this compliance assessment has not yet been completed.</p> <p>Hockomock Swamp was originally bisected by the existing railroad grade, which was built in ca. 1863-66, and it remains so today, as observed by the different hydrologic regimes resulting in two different plant communities on either side of the ROW (i.e., Atlantic white cedar on the west; red maple on the east).</p>
H-012.04	Kyla Bennett	Number one, we need an extension of time. It's unreasonable to expect us to read 2,500 pages in 46 business days. You are making yourselves vulnerable to a lawsuit without giving us an extension.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c)) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
H-012.05	Kyla Bennett	Number two, the state needs to do a supplemental DEIS, because they have not provided the information necessary.	USACE does not agree information was missing from the DEIS that would require a supplemental DEIS.
H-012.06	Kyla Bennett	And, finally, the state's preferred alternative is not legally permissible. Follow the law and the science, not the politics. The bus is the LEDPA.	<p>Regulatory requirements will be followed, see Chapter 8.</p> <p>The Corps has determined that the Rapid Bus alternative is not practicable. The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p>
H-013.01	Scott Martin	I would like to know if a feasibility study has truly been conducted to ensure long-term financial stability of the project as well as the potential usage of this rail line.	<p>Funding issues are outside the scope of this EIS/EIR. Ridership projections were conducted by the regional agency with special expertise in travel demand forecasting (CTPS) and reviewed by USACE and MassDOT.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-013.02	Scott Martin	<p>Job creation and environmental protection are sound reasons but not if the future of the rail generates an increase in the overwhelming deficit the MBTA already has on the books.</p> <p>One of the marketed purposes of this expansion is to bring passengers seeking employment from New Bedford to Fall River -- from New Bedford and Fall River to Boston where the jobs are located.</p> <p>Does the state not realize there are plenty of unemployed people in Boston that could fill those jobs if they existed?</p>	Funding issues are outside the scope of this EIS/EIR.
H-013.03	Scott Martin	<p>There's also the cost of transportation. If the ticketing price is structured similar to current pricing, it will cost at least \$300 for riders, based on Zone 8 to Middleborough being 250. It's likely that the state will find enough riders to pay \$300 a month for the train plus parking lot fees to get into Boston in order to cover the expense of the train. The stated benefit of providing Boston workers access to affordable housing in the South Coast is negated by the prohibitive cost of the transportation. The train loses its appeal when a parking pass and gas ends up costing around the same.</p> <p>What's more likely to happen is the state will need to subsidize the tickets as well as pay the operating expense differential, which will lead to another deficit-feeding, state-run endeavor. It's shortsighted thinking like that that landed us a \$4.6 million bridge for horses to walk over Route 24.</p> <p>It created many jobs for about three to four years, but in the end the money spent will never be recouped. These same jobs could have been directed at the hundreds of overpasses and bridges that people and vehicles actually use that are in serious disrepair.</p>	<p>Travel cost was incorporated in the ridership modeling conducted by CTPS, including transit fares and parking costs.</p> <p>A bridge for horses over Route 24 is not related to the South Coast Rail project and thus is outside the scope of this EIS/EIR.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-013.04	Scott Martin	<p>I would also like to ask for an extension. I know that we have about 24,000 residents in Easton, and I would largely believe that the majority of them oppose this, but none of them knew of this meeting tonight.</p> <p>There was a very poor notification method. I think an extension and perhaps another meeting with proper advertising and notification. If it wasn't for the fact that I have some very proactive neighbors, I wouldn't know about this tonight, and you would see a lot more people in this auditorium if they knew about it.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p> <p>The public hearings were appropriately noticed through multiple methods (newspaper ads, email, mail, website).</p>
H-014.01	Doug Lewis	First and foremost, I'd like to see you extend the time allocated to review this document. It's not -- the 27th of May is not enough time.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
H-014.02	Doug Lewis	<p>From a ROI perspective, I don't understand the purpose of this project. Is it to move people from New Bedford/Fall River for work in Boston, or is it to improve the economies of New Bedford and Fall River?</p> <p>If the purpose is to bring people from New Bedford and Fall River for jobs, where is the information regarding those jobs?</p>	The purpose and need for the project is explained in Chapter 2. Further information on socioeconomic trends (including jobs) is provided in Chapter 4.3.
H-014.03	Doug Lewis	In addition, I believe the ridership figures for the rail option are flawed and grossly overinflated. In fact, as a point of reference, the state originally estimated the Greenbush Line to be 4,200 riders. In a recently published article from the Boston Globe, the ridership after three years is averaging 2,100 riders or 50 percent of projection, and the numbers are declining.	The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region, and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20). The ridership modeling was conducted by CTPS, an agency with appropriate technical expertise in travel demand modeling using a regional model that has been accepted by FHWA/FTA as appropriate for supporting regional transportation conformity determinations required under the Clean Air Act.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-014.04	Doug Lewis	I have every reason to believe the state is doing the same here. With the average cost of \$1.6 billion, this project needs to be scrutinized to the full extent, especially in light of what's going on in today's economy where we are teetering right now between another recession and possible hyperinflation.	The cost of the alternatives was considered by USACE (Section 3.2.18).
H-014.05	Doug Lewis	<p>In looking at the documents, specifically the sections for noise and vibration, I was upset to see there are portions of Easton neighborhoods and entire streets completely missing from the report, i.e., from Prospect Street and Purchase Street.</p> <p>I would, therefore, assume there are other dwellings missing as well. This oversight will directly increase the project cost as well as add to the negative environmental impact of the Stoughton Alternative. I ask the Army Corps to please revisit this.</p>	Sensitive receptors along Prospect Street and Purchase Street in Easton were included in the noise and vibration analyses. As shown in Figure 4.6-6e, three moderate noise impacts would occur along Prospect Street under the Stoughton Electric Alternative. Three impacts would also occur along Purchase Street (shown in the same FEIS/FEIR figure).
H-014.06	Doug Lewis	In my review of the documents thus far, I believe the data to be incomplete and misleading, which is very concerning. This also leads me to believe the cost estimates for this project are grossly underestimated, which goes back to the original question, why are we doing this in the first place?	The purpose and need for the project is provided in Chapter 2. USACE has conducted a thorough and independent environmental review of the project.
H-014.07	Doug Lewis	If a transportation system, not South Coast Rail is to be put in place, and, again, I am not clear on its purpose, then I propose the Bus Alternative, which is the least -- excuse me -- I've got to -- this practicable word I have a problem with -- environmentally damaging practicable alternative, LEDPA.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
H-015.01	Dottie Fulginiti	Hi. My name is Dottie Fulginiti, and I'm from Easton, and I would just like to note that I am against the train coming through Easton.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-015.02	Dottie Fulginiti	I think it's environmentally irresponsible. It will jeopardize our water supply and our historic district. I also think it's economically irresponsible. There's no benefit to Easton for the train to come through. I think that the money would be much better spent to revitalize the South Coast. I think that there is good opportunity down there, but I don't see why it has to be connected by transportation.	Water resource impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.17, while historic resource impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.8. The purpose and need for the project is explained in Chapter 2.
H-015.03	Dottie Fulginiti	I think that we could hire a limo to drive every person from New Bedford to Boston for the amount of money that we're intending to spend on this project, and I agree with the representative from Berkley that this is a boondoggle.	Thank you for your comment.
H-016.01	Heather Lewis	First of all, I'd like to request an extension for the review period as well.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
H-016.02	Heather Lewis	<p>My first area of concern is the impact to Easton's drinking water. The train will pass extremely close to Easton's most productive drinking water well at the end of Gary Lane. This well is located in a Zone 1.</p> <p>I have multiple concerns in this regard. Mostly, I am concerned with the day-to-day impact of a train travelling beside this well and the impact to the quality of Easton's drinking supply.</p> <p>I have been to South Station before and looked at the trains and tracks. They are covered with grime. I am concerned that this runoff of the grime will end up contaminating Easton's drinking water. Easton residents do not want this residue and grime dripping into our water supply each and every time a train passes. I ask the Army Corps to review this concern carefully.</p>	Water resource impacts were addressed in Chapter 4.17 and mitigation measures incorporated in the project to manage stormwater runoff. Only the Whittenton Alternative alignment is located within 400' of an existing Zone 1 drinking water supply. No impacts to the Easton Drinking Water supply are expected.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-016.03	Heather Lewis	I also request that the two following environmental questions be answered during the review process: First, how can the Army Corps justify bisecting an area of critical environmental concern, let alone the largest vegetated fresh water wetland in the state?	Hockomock Swamp was originally bisected by the existing railroad grade, which was built in ca. 1863-66, and it remains so today.  Impacts to Hockomock Swamp have been addressed throughout the EIS/EIR and mitigation incorporated, most importantly the proposed trestle.
H-016.04	Heather Lewis	I also ask how will they mitigate for the fragmentation of the Hockomock Swamp if this Stoughton Alternative is chosen?	Impacts to Hockomock Swamp have been addressed throughout the EIS/EIR and mitigation incorporated, most importantly the proposed trestle.
H-016.05	Heather Lewis	I have heard other citizens ask for data to be checked and corrected. I would ask the same.  In the No. 3 slide from Kristina Egan earlier, which described which alternative has the least environmental impact, there is a discrepancy between the listed items and then their quotation from the DEIS. They are on that slide alone.	The comment does not pertain to the DEIS/DEIR.
H-016.06	Heather Lewis	Lastly, I would like to bring to the Army Corps' attention that the comments you receive from residents of Fall River and New Bedford and the residents -- representatives have been influenced by the state.  As an example of influence just last week Mass. DOT hosted a question and answer session for residents of New Bedford and Fall River, quote, "To help residents prepare for the hearing, and to describe how to write a comment letter." No such workshop was offered in Stoughton, Easton, or Raynham where residents have serious concerns. I believe this is an example of inequity and that the state is trying to coach residents of these towns who would like to see this project completed.  I respectfully ask that the Corps keep the state's motives in check when they listen to and review the comments.	USACE independently reviewed the project, studies and comments from the public.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-017.01	Steven Drobnis	<p>I would like to speak against the commuter rail and freight rail project going through the Town of Stoughton. Currently, we have eight street grade crossings and should you proceed with this devastating program, the lives of our children and citizens would be irreparably harmed.</p> <p>First, there's a question how much is a child's life worth. My value, it is priceless. Many children have died from the trains at railroad crossings.</p>	The safety impact of at-grade crossings is addressed in Chapter 4.1.
H-017.02	Steven Drobnis	Secondly, freight trains increase the length of time that a gate blocks a roadway, which is precious time when an ambulance or fire apparatus is delayed from reaching its destination to save property or a life. In just ten minutes, irreparable brain damage occurs to an individual suffering a heart attack.	Traffic delay impacts at grade-crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.1, mitigation is proposed to address adverse impacts.
H017.03	Steven Drobnis	Thirdly, our middle school is right next to the train tracks and just consider 34 to 37 passenger trains a day blowing the whistle in addition to numerous freight trains while our children are attempting to study or take a test. The high school is directly behind the middle school as well.	Noise impacts and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 4.6.
H-017.04	Steven Drobnis	Fourthly, hazardous material could be transported by these freight trains through our quiet, suburban community. The proposed LNG facility in Fall River could possibly send LNG freight trains and other hazardous material such as PCBs through our heavily residential community, causing catastrophic loss of life and property damage; and, whereas, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has taken over the liability for the CSX rails and assumed responsibility, this limits the liability for suit against municipalities, including the state, to a maximum of \$100,000 per person to my understanding.	No change in freight operations is anticipated- freight would continue to operate on segments where it currently operates, thus no increased risk of hazardous materials accidents on freight rail would occur due to the project. In addition, the proposed Weavers Cove LNG facility has been cancelled.
H-017.05	Steven Drobnis	In addition, the proposed \$2 billion cost of this project when -- as an estimated 1,500 passengers per day is equal to close to one million, 333 dollars and 33 -- I mean, \$1,333,333 cost per passenger. It would be less costly to buy each one of them a Cadillac with free fuel for life.	Ridership information is provided in Chapter 3, along with cost per rider information over a 30-year period. The 30-year cost per rider is the appropriate metric due to the long life of the infrastructure investment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-017.06	Steven Drobnis	Should this project go forth, it will bring economic hardship to our town, a nightmare in traffic congestion, and undue financial burden to our taxpayers. No rail project within the State of Massachusetts has ever broken even or made a profit and has only been a burden to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth.	Environmental issues were fully evaluated in this EIS/EIR. Funding issues are outside the scope of issues addressed in the environmental review.
H-018.01	James Azevedo	<p>Since 1997, I have been pointing out the dangers to Easton's wells to the Army Corps when they had their office at Waltham and then in Concord.</p> <p>I pointed out the four and a half miles of wetlands connected to the Queset Brook Aquifer in the three main wells, also, several wells that belonged to West Bridgewater downstream.</p> <p>Now, when asked when I was in their office in 2002 what I was looking for, I said "safety measures." He said "what?" And I said "Retaining walls and drain pipes carry the effluents away." He said "That would cost too much, 50, 60 million."</p> <p>Evidently, somebody studied this, and if they can't do it right the first time, why are we letting them do it now?</p>	Water resource impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.17.
H-019.01	Priscilla Chapman	<p>We generally support commuter rail improvements as an alternative to highway expansion and a means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We support the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan as a means to preserve habitat and reduce vehicle miles traveled.</p> <p>At the same time this project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological significance and habitat for a number of state-listed species.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-019.02	Priscilla Chapman	<p>Reconstruction of the railbed in the Hockomock Swamp would cut through the largest unfragmented and pristine area of wetland habitat in Eastern Mass.</p> <p>The DEIS utilized the U. Mass CAPS Analysis to measure the loss of ecological integrity and biodiversity that would result from each alternative, and that analysis indicates that the Stoughton Alternative would result in a major loss of ecological integrity, 456 units as compared to 324 for Attleboro, and zero for the Rapid Bus. The Stoughton Alternative also results in filling of significant areas of wetlands, impacts to vernal pools, diversion of a stream, and other impacts.</p> <p>We request that you require preparation of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and report for the following reasons: The MEPA scope required that the Draft EIR include a detailed mitigation plan for impacts to wetlands, rare species and biodiversity and wildlife, but the DEIS states that the mitigation plans will be prepared at a later date. Without the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory standards.</p>	<p>The Hockomock Swamp is fragmented by the existing railbed, which is currently used by ATVs (factors not accounted for in the CAPS analysis). Fragmentation impacts of the project would be minimized with the construction of the trestle.</p> <p>The level of mitigation detail provided in the DEIS/DEIR was appropriate given the number of alternatives under consideration at that time. The FEIS/FEIR provides additional detailed information regarding the mitigation plans for the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives, see Chapters 4.14 through 4.16.</p>
H-019.03	Priscilla Chapman	<p>The MEPA scope required an endangered species impact analysis based on surveys and vernal pool identification. To the best of our knowledge, those were not provided for areas in the Southern Triangle.</p>	<p>As described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area. No further endangered species surveys were required based on coordination with NHESP.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-019.04	Priscilla Chapman	<p>The DEIS identifies projected impacts of induced growth and development, such as increased greenhouse gas emissions, loss of forests and farmland, and it says that those impacts will be mitigated by implementation of the corridor plan. We request a detailed implementation plan for how that will happen to ensure that those offsets will occur.</p> <p>And, finally, the MEPA certificate required the DEIS to address how the project and the corridor plan will be finalized -- financed, and that's not very much.</p>	Section 5.5 addresses implementation of the Corridor Plan.
H-020.01	John Malloy	I look at the cost of this project of \$2 billion and think of the ridership projections, and I have difficulty understanding those ridership projections, as I have attended other meetings because I had worked in Southeastern Massachusetts for a period of 10 years. As such, I found that folks who live in Fall River and New Bedford tend to rely on Providence for medical services, for events, and for recreation. They come to Boston only when they need to come to Boston for some other reasons.	The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region (as measured by surveys), and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20.) The modeling takes into account trips to/from Providence as well, not only Boston. The primary driver of ridership for this project is commuters, but other types of trips (medical, entertainment etc.) are also accounted for.
H-020.02	John Malloy	<p>However, when I look also at the traffic coming up Route 24 and heading into Boston, I see it gets choked up on Route 24, just before it hits Route 128, and most of the congestion begins going west up 128, rather than into Boston. So I look at the ridership projections and wonder about that.</p> <p>Hearing folks speak tonight, I think of \$2 billion would really help Fall River and New Bedford a lot better than probably the train. I only see the train as servicing a casino if it lands in Southeastern Massachusetts.</p> <p>So I'd ask -- I don't know if that falls within the scope of the Army Corps of Engineers to look at the ridership, but I would encourage them to do so.</p>	USACE independently examined the work of CTPS on the ridership projections.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-021.01	Edmund Hands	Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak, and I hope it's become clear that the -- the state is pushing the most politically expedient route rather than a route that is supported by the scientific evidence. I think it dramatically underestimates the impact on the Hockomock Swamp, and I join with my fellow citizens in Easton in requesting additional time to analyze that.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.
H-021.02	Edmund Hands	And just a brief look through, I notice that it doesn't mention that marble salamanders are found in the Hockomock Swamp. It underestimates the potential of the right-of-way for turtle habitat, saying it has been degraded by bicycles and dirt bikes, but it doesn't really mention other areas and other alternatives that may have been significantly degraded as well.	The NHESP did not identify marbled salamanders as a species potentially impacted by the proposed work within Hockomock Swamp.
H-021.03	Edmund Hands	Also, there are at least five buildings in the North Easton area that are within 25 feet of the track. These are historic buildings, and I think we need a closer look at the impact of vibrations on those buildings as well.	As discussed in Chapter 4.8, vibration analyses for each of the diesel and electric alternatives indicate that the vibration levels from train pass-bys are below the threshold to cause structural damage to surrounding buildings or structures. It should also be noted that most of the buildings or structures eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are in a context of functioning passenger and/or freight railroads in the past.
H-021.04	Edmund Hands	<p>I oppose all rail transport for passengers, and I kind of agree with the statement that was made that that was yesterday's technology for tomorrow. I support the bus route. It seems to me that enhanced bus service is gaining a wider range of looks throughout the country and in other countries while rail seems to be falling behind.</p> <p>We need to take a closer look at the issue of freight traffic. I know we're supposed to be evaluating passenger routes, but the Stoughton Alternative now says it can carry freight, and the potential of an accident in the Hockomock Swamp or near our drinking water is something that deserves increased scrutiny.</p>	<p>The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.</p> <p>Freight would continue to operate along segments where it already exists. No freight train usage of the Stoughton Line between Stoughton Station and Longmeadow Road in Taunton is planned or anticipated at this time. Therefore, the project would not increase freight accident risks (the risk would remain the same as the existing condition).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-021.05	Edmund Hands	The cost of the project, I think, reflects in the criteria that is used to determine the correct route. Criteria 2.2 says it should not significantly adversely affect the existing or future capacity reliability and quality of the regional transportation system. I think if you build any rail route at between 2 billion and \$4 billion, it's going to be like that really bad draft choice that you make that you can't cut because you put so much money into it; but if you invest in a bus system, which seems to be the future of transportation for passengers, you're going to be spending half as much money. If it turns out to be a mistake, you'd still have the opportunity to correct it.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
H-021.06	Edmund Hands	And, finally, on the issue of smart growth, I'd like to point out that unlike times to and from Boston, smart growth is a policy decision. It is not a fact of nature or a law like the law of gravity. There are alternative suggestions by academics as well as other politicians, and the fact that smart growth requires rail makes it a core criteria to use.	Thank you for your comment.
H-022.01	Michael Mazzuca	My name is Mike Mazzuca, and I'm from Easton Massachusetts, and I'm here representing my two young sons because what we're talking about is open, operating rails through existing neighborhoods.  My kids love trains. I don't know how I'm going to keep them off the tracks.	Commuter rail operates safely through many residential areas in Massachusetts currently. Portions of the right-of-way would be fenced in developed areas to discourage unauthorized access. Safety issues associated with at-grade crossings are addressed in Chapter 4.1.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-022.02	Michael Mazzuca	<p>I read this here, and it says the purpose of the rail is to more fully meet the existing and future demand for public transportation between Fall River and New Bedford and Boston, Massachusetts. I think the key word there is demand, because I don't think there is any demand.</p> <p>I went to UMass Dartmouth for engineering. I lived in Fairhaven. I worked in Fall River. I had no plans of ever going from there to Boston. We always went to Providence. I have people who still work there. I have engineering friends, lawyer friends, professional people who could get jobs in Boston. I asked them if your job moved to Cambridge, what would you do? They said I would drive in until I found another job, or I moved, because there's no way I am taking that much time on the train to go to Boston. It's just not in the cards.</p>	The basis for the travel demand estimates is explained in the FEIS/FEIR (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.1).
H-022.03	Michael Mazzuca	I'd also like to take a look at the bus plan. I look in the rider -- in the draft report, and I just want to know how a dedicated bus lane with the zipper gets less ridership than expanding the existing buses.	The Rapid Bus alternative was eliminated as explained in Chapter 3. The ridership of the Rapid Bus Alternative being less than the No-Build/Enhanced Bus can be explained by the different station locations that are served by each alternative and the different service patterns provided. The ridership modeling was conducted by the regional agency with expertise in travel forecasting (CTPS) and reviewed by MassDOT and USACE. The CTPS modeling procedure is reviewed by U.S. DOT because it used for regional emissions analyses for transportation conformity.
H-023.01	Donald Michaud	I have written many letters to the Corps of Engineers and to the Mass. DOT, and I hope I -- I wonder -- my question would be do I have to write that same letter over again? Because in the letter, I have stated 15 facts which supports the Stoughton Alternative if there's to be a train that I would choose the Stoughton Alternative for 15 different facts, and of these facts, I will mention a few.	Thank you for your comment.
H-023.02	Donald Michaud	Fact: It has been the best cost-benefit effectiveness versus the other.	Cost per rider information for the alternatives is presented in Table 3.3-6. Stoughton Diesel has the lowest cost per rider of the build alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-023.03	Donald Michaud	Fact: The trip time is 72 to 74 minutes, which is better than the other alternatives.	The Stoughton Electric Alternative travel time from New Bedford to Boston in the peak period is 77 minutes based on the refined run time analyses for the FEIS/FEIR, but it remains the fastest of the alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.
H-023.04	Donald Michaud	Fact: Less acres of wetlands will be taken compared to the Attleboro Bypass – compared to the -- yeah, Attleboro Bypass and alternatives. Stoughton is 6.74 acres versus Attleboro 7.82 to 8.5 acres. Middleborough is 3.61 acres.	The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
H-023.05	Donald Michaud	Fact: It is compatible with the existing rail system.	Thank you for your comment.
H-023.06	Donald Michaud	Fact: It is a straight shot to Boston.  Fact: It adds another direct rail line to Boston.	Thank you for your comment.
H-023.07	Donald Michaud	Fact -- and that's very important, instead of just having the Old Colony Line, which everything dumps into, at least if something happens, and we've already had four times happening, people being killed on that line and people stranded in Boston they could be able to get out and get to Taunton and get home a little earlier than four hours later.	Thank you for your comment.
H-023.08	Donald Michaud	I guess I have another minute coming. But the freight trains also is a consideration. Boston -- Fall River has a big state pier, and there's great potential for straight – for freight there, and as well as this gas situation that they talk about.  So, I say I now recommend that only the -- the Whittenton be eliminated and just Stoughton if the train is to be the method. And I now recommend that this Stoughton Rail Alternative be -- be the one that the Final Environmental Impact Report is chosen for.	Thank you for your comment.
H-025.01	Paul DiNicola	Along with many others from Easton, I propose that there's an extension for the review of this proposal.	The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-025.02	Paul DiNicola	<p>One of the alternatives seems to be an all-or-none option that we have here. It's either rail or bus or nothing. I think we need to look at an alternative hybrid, use existing train stations, but maybe use buses.</p> <p>One of the things that many people have brought up is really the economic feasibility of this, putting in a railbed and all those are really sunk costs, and if doesn't work out, it's just cost and cost and cost.</p> <p>If we did buses and see if you really get the ridership for a while, bring them to existing stations, do people really want to go? Then you get a chance to say, do you get the numbers that back what you want to do? And then you can come back later to extend these trains and avoid all of this other nonsense that appears to be going on as far as, you know, disruption of the environment. So I think people ought to look at some alternatives that are least impact economically and even environmentally.</p>	Bus alternatives were considered in detail, but were found to be not practicable (see Chapter 3).
H-025.03	Paul DiNicola	<p>The other concern around ridership and all of this, just recently if you looked at the census, Massachusetts lost a representative; so that means population, we're losing it. Traveling to the cities, you can look at what's happening to trains and ridership. So I think, again, the feasibility on this really, really needs to be looked at.</p>	The ridership analyses for the FEIS/FEIR incorporated 2010 Census data to ensure an up-to-date consideration of socioeconomic trends.
H-025.04	Paul DiNicola	<p>The rails, they haven't been used for 50 years. Well, guess what, Easton has changed. Many of the other towns have changed dramatically both in population and everywhere else where we're building. Also, I think the environmental laws and regulations and what we look for has changed over this time. So to say it went there before and go -- you know, we can just -- you pick up and do the same thing without a real study and -- and looking at what the impact to the town is a little bit ridiculous. I don't think that that's -- you can just go on 50 years.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-025.05	Paul DiNicola	<p>And I -- let me see. Oh, yeah, I wanted to question the DOT's statement about wouldn't need a lot of cars if you use the Stoughton existing line. Guess what? You heard people want -- I want more runs out of New Bedford and all this. I want so much of this. I want frequency. I extend the time 70 minutes. You've got to add more cars. You've got to add more trains, and to be honest, for two stops, that is one of the highest delayed trains I've seen, and I've ridden it for years; so, it's not going to be that good of a line, and people are just going to try it out and then avoid it. If you get delays as much as you do on Stoughton, and then you have to, you know, lengthen it because you're going 70 minutes, it's just going to make it unbearable for people to ride or do it today; and I would say one of the last big train wrecks was on that Stoughton line.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-026.01	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	<p>I rise in opposition to the Stoughton proposal, but in support of the bus alternative. I think tonight we have heard from many people about what is in accordance with the public interest.</p> <p>So I'm not going to repeat the environmentally damaging impacts, the -- especially the -- the problems with our water supply. As a resident of North Easton and the Village, I'm going to be awakened at 5:00 a.m. in the morning. I don't know if that interests you, but it certainly does me. I'm getting on in years. I'm 68. I know I don't look it. I don't act it, but, you know what, when that ambulance is called, I might be a victim because the ambulance is going to be coming from the other side of the tracks.</p> <p>So, I was interested in what Lieutenant Colonel Howell mentioned. He talked about the impact on the human environment, and you heard many people tonight talk about that, whether it's the inaccessibility of services like the ambulance and fire, police, or whether it's the potential damage to our water supply. You've heard all those things. But think about the human impact. Every day, waking up at 5:00 a.m. from the blast of a train whistle. We have someone in our audience today, who has a house 20 feet from the tracks. All right. So -- so, please, consider that.</p>	The environmental and community issues cited in the comment were studied in the EIS/EIR.
H-026.02	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	We have five of the Henry Hobson Richardson's buildings, which are internationally known and historic. We have saved those for what? A train to come -- we've saved them this year from being destroyed. We're going to have condominiums there, apartments. For what? For the train to come past them within 25 feet to rattle them and cause all kinds of damage?	Vibration levels would not cause damage to buildings, see Chapter 4.7. Vibration annoyance to building occupants was evaluated and areas where mitigation is proposed are identified in Chapter 4.7.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-026.03	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	We have a wastewater treatment plant that's going in so that our downtown will be revitalized with restaurants and so forth that weren't formerly possible because of lack of sewer. You're going to devastate the Village of North Easton. You're going to devastate the Hockomock Swamp. You're going to create a problem for families and children and safety issues.	Thank you for your comment.
H-026.4	Priscilla Almquist-Olsen	Please, the future is not the train. My daughter works for a company from Rockville, Maryland, and when she moved from there to Princeton, they said, well, please, stay. You can work from home, and she does. She's more productive now. She has video conferencing. She has 12 people under her. She gets more done at home. The future is not transportation. The future is technology when it comes to jobs -- so I think this is very shortsighted.	Trends such as working from home are incorporated in the CTPS regional transportation model. These trends are not expected to eliminate the need for home- work trips.
H-027.01	Darshan Murphy	<p>Colonel, Moderator, Kristina, I want to cover also the human aspects. I know there's a lot of political and cost issues behind this, but the human, and I suppose some environmental reasoning is certainly of higher value.</p> <p>I'm on what's considered the zero foot line. There's a portion of my home that comes within less than 25 feet. At standard distances for rail, the -- the barrier wall that has been proposed -- and I don't have the facts -- would be less than 15 feet from a point on my home.</p> <p>I have a handicapped – mentally handicapped child, and I have two children that will be within 25 feet of the rail, even with a retaining wall, regardless of the safety measures, there's always an imminent threat that safety can be compromised.</p>	Portions of the right-of-way would be fenced in developed areas to ensure safety (as noted in Chapter 7).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-027.02	Darshan Murphy	<p>The Town of Easton has extensive environmental rules. I have a 100-foot dotted line that goes through my kitchen because it is a wetland barrier.</p> <p>Two-thirds of my land is considered environmentally safe, and I cannot do anything on that land if I -- I have about 12 dead trees right now on my land that would make it look a little bit better and may serve nature by getting rid of them and letting them compost or putting them to another use, and per the statutes and stipulations of Easton, those 12 trees could require a public hearing to remove, and we're talking about putting tons of dirt and other contaminants in the environment in and around my home.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-027.03	Darshan Murphy	On to more environmental and animal things. I learned today that the bluebird population of Easton is dwindling. It now has to be hand cared for by humans because of all the destruction that's occurring by the natural industrialization of our society.	Biodiversity impacts of the project alternatives are assessed in Chapter 4.14.
H-027.04	Darshan Murphy	Again, the grade crossings provide danger and safety issues, particularly for the children. Our towns do not have the money to build sidewalks. I can throw rocks and hit my elementary school. If you don't believe me, try it, but it requires a bus because there's not a safe, direct route to my elementary school, and my seven-year-old is more than capable of walking about 450 yards.	The project would meet safety standards for the design of at-grade crossings consistent with Federal Railroad Administration requirements. Public safety impacts due to grade crossings are discussed in Chapter 4.1.
H-027.05	Darshan Murphy	Lastly, on the cost front, all of a sudden, we are cutting jobs. We're cutting everything, including environmental funds left and right in this state, and my child cannot be educated. There are teachers losing their jobs. The city does not have enough money for my child; however, we have \$2 billion to build a rail.	The cost of the alternatives was considered by USACE (Section 3.2.18).



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-028.01	Stephen Ford	<p>I'd first like to say I support all my fellow residents of Easton and the concern of the rail going through Easton. But in addition to that I want to reiterate a lot of what they said, but one thing I did want to bring up was my safety and traffic concerns with all of the street grade crossings across the whole project, actually, but particularly in my area.</p> <p>Reading the report, I didn't see a lot of detail that outlined the method or the threshold where bridges and tunnels would be required, you know, where there's significant impact that there needed to be some other structure to improve that area.</p>	Information on at-grade crossings (including locations that would be grade separated) is provided in Chapter 4.1 and associated figures.
H-028.02	Stephen Ford	And that was actually across a lot of areas I was kind of concerned. Even in the noise area, I did not see anything that described, you know -- it definitely described, you know, the noise level impact as severe, moderate, and low, but it didn't say that there was a target or a threshold that was needed to be met, and that's where my concern is. So you can put up a wall, but if you don't dampen it enough, I -- I'm kind of concerned.	Mitigation was evaluated for areas exceeding the FTA "severe impact" level. Mitigation effectiveness is discussed in Chapter 4.6 (minimum effectiveness of noise wall for example).
H-028.03	Stephen Ford	So I'm looking for some more detail on some more, you know, mitigation alternatives that help -- help figure out what the true requirement is and really what the project is going to be held against. And that's what I wanted to voice tonight.	Additional mitigation details are provided in the FEIS/FEIR.
H-029.01	John Moniz	<p>That being said, I am a resident of the City of New Bedford. I am here solely on principle alone. I was raised in a family that was taught to stand up and voice your opinion for what you feel is right. I feel South Coast Rail is right for my area, which is the South Coast, New Bedford.</p> <p>Now, ladies and gentlemen, here, you have nothing to worry about. Absolutely nothing. Because our state and local delegation in my area for the past 25 years has completely and utterly given us a disservice. So, therefore, this operation will never take place. So you have nothing to worry about.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-029.02	John Moniz	As I look out in this crowd, I see productive members of society, taxpayers, and people who are willing to stand up and voice their opinion because they don't want their home to be destroyed. They don't want their children to be hurt. They don't want their historical parts of their city to be taken away from them. You're absolutely 100 percent right.	Thank you for your comment.
H-029.03	John Moniz	<p>You have to understand that I am marrying someone who drives 120 miles every single day to work. So to those people who say, we don't work from the South Coast in Boston, we do. We're very small; so, therefore, \$2 billion does not, in my estimation -- it's not deemed adequate. It's a burden on you. It's a burden on me. It's a burden on every taxpayer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.</p> <p>This state is in a financial shortfall, and we're spending money right now on these individuals here, the Army Corps, excluded, Ms. Egan, and the entire South Coast Rail organization, and at the end of 2012, we have no funding. So this operation will never transpire. They do not have funding at all. They have to fund themselves until 2012 or 2016. This will never happen, ladies and gentlemen. You have to see where I'm coming from. I have to stand up as a resident of New Bedford. I have to come to these meetings and I have to voice my opinion in support. In reality, it's never going to happen.</p> <p>So I sit here and I applaud you for coming out and supporting your area, and I'm just giving my opinion as a humble taxpayer. I'm supporting mine. Don't worry. It's not going to happen in our lifetime.</p> <p>Michael Dukakis stood up 25 years ago and said New Bedford was going to have a South Coast Rail, and every governor since then has said we're going to have a rail to New Bedford. I'm 34, and when they started saying it, I had a full head of hair. Not happening</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-030.01	Jill Maclean	<p>I just want to clarify that Mass. DOT and the South Coast Rail Team were in New Bedford last week for -- meeting for a Q and A session, solely because I took the initiative as the Assistant City Planner and the Commuter Rail Task Force representative to ask them to come down.</p> <p>I'm the one that put out the -- most of the promotional materials for this meeting to ensure that the citizens and the residents of New Bedford could be fully versed on this project and could take the opportunity to ask questions beforehand, knowing that there would not be much of a presentation during the actual Army Corps hearings. So, again, it was under my initiative and my asking that South Coast Rail Team came down to New Bedford and for no other reason. They were not in the other towns because apparently the other towns did not take that initiative themselves. So that's one.</p>	Thank you for you for your comment.
H-030.02	Jill Maclean	<p>And, secondly, I just want to state, for the record, that the City of New Bedford strongly supports the Stoughton Direct Alternative. The 70 minutes to Boston is very important for commuters to Boston but also those doing a reverse commute.</p> <p>It will improve our economic development opportunities in the City, as well as providing tourism opportunities, access to the amenities that we have on the South Coast. It's also important for the connectivity of our region between the tri-cities of Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton and the regions in between.</p> <p>We also view it as an opportunity for education, knowing that our students would be able to go to Bridgewater State, even Massasoit State College that offers different programs than may be available in New Bedford or at U. Mass. Dartmouth, as well, of course, as the universities in Boston itself.</p>	Thank you for your comment. The Stoughton Electric Alternative travel time from New Bedford to Boston in the peak period is 77 minutes based on the refined run time analyses for the FEIS/FEIR, but it remains the fastest of the alternatives evaluated in the FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-030.03	Jill Maclean	<p>My last point is that the cities of Fall River and New Bedford are the only cities left in the Commonwealth of their size and population that do not have commuter rail service, and we believe that this is very inequitable for our cities; and over the decades, we've been promised this project again and again. It has not come to fruition. This time we actually have a governor that supports it, and this project has been made a priority, and due to that, there has been tremendous amount of planning that has taken place.</p> <p>We've developed the South Coast Economic Development Corridor Plan, of which the City, through that plan, has also made some movements to already implement some of the recommendations.</p> <p>The City of New Bedford has recently completed its first master plan since 1964. The Corridor Plan, along with the South Coast Rail Project, play a tremendous role in both our transportation and economic development sections of our master plan, and we continue now to revise and update our entire zoning code which includes the transit-oriented development locations at the Whale's Tooth station and the King's Highway station; and it also includes the zoning for transfer development rights which could protect open space in other towns around us if the law is passed that we can use those development rights across town boundaries, which we are hopeful that it will, and we fully support that as well as part of this project.</p>	The consistency of the South Coast Rail project with New Bedford 2020 is acknowledged.
H-030.04	Jill Maclean	<p>And I guess just, lastly, I would like to add that the citizens and the residents of the South Coast continue to pay and have paid for many decades for commuter rail service to every other section of the Commonwealth, as I previously stated, and yet, we still do not have it ourselves; and we feel that this is a grave instance of unfairness, and that we demand equity and rail service to the City of New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton.</p>	Thank you for you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-031.01	Darshan Murphy	I wanted to also state that there is a lot of wetland to the opposite side of my property, and they would have to extend into that wetland at least 100 feet, if not more. And right now that wetland not only contains water but is the home for at least 100 mallard ducks, and there's at least two to three nests. I missed that.	Wetland impacts are addressed in Chapter 4.16.
H-031.02	Darshan Murphy	<p>I too want to reiterate that I didn't know much about the meeting. It wasn't very well publicized. I certainly did not know there was a 2,500-page report. I didn't even know the Army Corps of Engineers was ready, and they -- I thought that was another phase that hadn't happened yet; so, again, the dissemination of information is very poor.</p> <p>I think they need to post signs even in the middle of towns. Like, on signs, it says, you know, a report's available or, you know, meetings or some kind of advertisement more than just a 10-sentence paragraph, in a 10-page paper that only a percentage of the people get, because that's how I found out about the meeting.</p>	Notice of the DEIS/DEIR availability was provided through the Federal Register, Environmental Monitor, newspaper ads, mass mailings/emails to the project mailing list from previous outreach efforts and the project website.
H-031.03	Darshan Murphy	I wanted to make a comment about another person's -- or about Kristina's report that this was supposed to be a 100-year project or that the service could extend up to 100 years. I think technologically that's impossible, and that a reality check needs to be made on that.	The future analysis year for the updated transportation analyses in the FEIS/FEIR is 2035. Speculating on how long in the future the infrastructure could be viable is beyond the scope of this environmental review.
H-031.04	Darshan Murphy	Oh, and then they talked about how in the Hockomock Swamp that there would be some kind of raising of the train track or whatever, so that animals could pass underneath, and I want to make it very clear that animals probably will not pass underneath of that; and most likely for the type of environmental terrain that is, most animals are going to leave or vacate the zone in and around the track there because it's going to scare them, and you will have destroyed any habitat ability in that spot.	It is anticipated that wildlife would cross at the trestle during times when no train is passing through.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-031.05	Darshan Murphy	And then I ran out of time. I didn't get to say that like everyone else, for me and my family and the people around me that there's significant noise issues. There's significant vibration issues. There's significant pollutants, such as leaks from the train, and brake dust, et cetera. There will be significant emissions at my home, and I stated before that the train is less than 25 feet from my house.	The environmental issues raised by the comment were addressed in the FEIS/FEIR. The diesel alternatives would not result in pollutant concentrations exceeding air quality standards (Section 4.9.3.9).
H-031.06	Darshan Murphy	And another thing not mentioned is that if they decide to go with an electric train, there's a lot of EMF danger, and, again, with two children in my home, we don't want the EMF that close to our home because the -- again, the electrical lines will be within 25 feet of my home, and, again, those are all detrimental to my children.	EMF exposure at levels with evidence of health risks is not expected under the electric commuter rail alternatives.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-032.01	Scott Martin	<p>One additional comment I would like to make on the record is that learning of the improper notification methods that were used for tonight's meeting, I learned of when I arrived here.</p> <p>I found out that there were postcards sent out to surrounding towns but Easton was not one of those that received it. Berkley and Canton were both towns that received postcards notifying them of this meeting. It would have been a much larger showing of Easton residents because the majority of them oppose this, and I think that it was an improper procedure to hold the meeting in Mansfield as well as not to notify people properly.</p> <p>I think that another meeting should behold -- held as well as an extension on the deadline for comments; and I'd like to see that happen so that other Easton residents that were unaware of tonight's meeting could actually make their thoughts known.</p> <p>Proper notification should go out throughout newspapers, web sites, signs in the town, postcards, mailings. For something this big and that costs this much money, I think the more people that are aware of it, the better and not hidden from the public.</p>	<p>The DEIS/DEIR public review period exceeded the 45-day minimum required under NEPA (40 CFR 1506.10(c) and the 37 days required under MEPA.</p> <p>Postcards were sent to everyone that MassDOT had a mailing address for, not just residents of one or two communities. The commenter may not have been in the MassDOT database. Other outreach included media releases, email blasts to everyone in the database, flyers posted on the website and circulated to the database list, and there was news coverage of much of the outreach.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-033.01	Abdul Shibli	<p>It was nice talking with you this afternoon. As I mentioned to you, I have lived in South Easton for almost 24 years and have been following the developments relating to the commuter rail project since I moved from Boston to Easton to work as a professor at Stonehill College. Before I moved to Easton in 1987, for three years, I commuted to Stonehill from Boston. My wife, who graduated from Stonehill in 1990, commuted to Fall River for her job there in 1990-1991. I myself became a railroad commuter in 2000 when I started working for Harvard University and commuted until 2005 from Mansfield to Harvard Square. I now work in Boston, but drive to work! My wife, who drove to Boston College for her MSW program, would have benefitted from a commuter rail system if it were available then!</p> <p>I am also currently teaching an Economics course at Framingham State University and during my lectures, emphasize the benefits of public transportation given the price of gas, traffic congestion, and global warming trends.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-033.02	Abdul Shibli	<p>So, as you can imagine, having a commuter rail through Easton would be good for young families like us. Even now, for me, for my kids, and also for my visitors. I have done some serious work as an environmental economist (particularly with one of Harvard's Environmental Policy programs) and understand the pro and con arguments of building a commuter rail system. I feel that given all the scrutiny this project has received over the last 20 years (if not more), the economic, environmental, and developmental benefits for Massachusetts are overwhelming. Plus, as a resident, my family and I feel that this will be very beneficial to us. My son lives in Jamaica Plain and uses the public transportation system when available. My daughter, who went to Tufts for her undergraduate (as a resident), and is an attorney working in NYC, is an avid train rider, and will be able to come and visit us more often if she can catch a commuter train to North Easton from South Station! By the way, both attended the Public Schools in Easton.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-033.03	Abdul Shibli	I hope I have conveyed in this brief statement why I look forward to a rail connection that is economical and completed without any additional impediments. Please feel free to contact me if you need more information or to provide additional supporting materials.	Thank you for your comment.
H-034.01	Randall Kunz	The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) voted unanimously on April 27, 2011 to commend the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a thorough and objective analysis of the South Coast Rail Project in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report, dated February, 2011.	Thank you for your comment.
H-034.02	Randall Kunz	SRPEDD supports the analysis in the report of both the transportation and environmental factors associated with the alternatives that were evaluated.	Thank you for your comment.
H-034.03	Randall Kunz	We agree that the Stoughton Route provides the best service to Taunton, Fall River, and New Bedford as measured by travel time and ridership. We support the Corps' findings that the operational obstacles associated with both the Attleboro and Rapid Bus Alternative will make these alternatives infeasible. The fact that the Stoughton Route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton Alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective.	Thank you for your comment.
H-034.04	Randall Kunz	SRPEDD is also in agreement that the Whittenton Alternative through the City of Taunton poses additional operational problems and should not be considered further. Specifically, the large number of grade crossings in Taunton will be unnecessarily disruptive and will add to the travel time, and thus lowering the ridership numbers.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-034.05	Randall Kunz	SRPEDD further agrees with the analysis of environmental factors, including wetlands, air quality, water resources, et cetera and supports the conclusion that the Stoughton Route performed best on the measure of environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton Route follows railbeds that were in use a little over 50 years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.	Thank you for your comment.
H-034.06	Randall Kunz	We are very familiar with the corridor as it passes through the Hockomock Swamp ACEC and agree with the conclusion that the wetlands impact will be limited, especially if the trestle is constructed. We would further request significant mitigation to repair any degraded areas of the ACEC.	The Hockomock Swamp would not be degraded.
H-034.07	Randall Kunz	It should be pointed out that there are many factors beyond the project purpose that argue in favor of this project and in favor of the Stoughton Alternative. These factors include the smart growth benefits of this investment and the significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled and subsequent greenhouse gas reductions. The region also anxiously anticipates the projected economic benefits that will be associated with the restoration of commuter rail service to Southeastern Massachusetts.	These issues were considered in the EIS/EIR.
H-034.08	Randall Kunz	We believe that based upon the information presented in the DEIS that the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) should be determined to be the Stoughton Alternative. SRPEDD further supports the electric alternative with its lower carbon footprint and faster travel time between South Coast and Boston.	Thank you for your comment.
H-034.09	Randall Kunz	SRPEDD urges the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the LEDPA as expeditiously as possible. The region has been working on the restoration of commuter rail service for more than two decades, and we are anxious for the Corps to complete its review so that Mass. DOT can proceed with a financial plan and other aspects of this project.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-035.01	Roy Nascimento	The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce remains a strong advocate for the extension of commuter rail service from Boston to New Bedford and other communities in the South Coast region of Massachusetts.	Thank you for your comment.
H-035.02	Roy Nascimento	The Chamber agrees with the conclusions that identify the Stoughton Alternative as providing the best service to the communities in the South Coast region and providing the least environmental impact. The fact that the Stoughton Route is served mostly by trains already in service as opposed to dozens of new trips on an already heavily traveled corridor make the Stoughton Alternative the only viable choice from a transportation perspective. Also, the fact that the Stoughton Route follows railbeds that were in use a little over 50 years ago is an obvious factor in minimizing the environmental impact.	Thank you for your comment.
H-035.03	Roy Nascimento	We believe our final report should include double tracking the rail lines to provide future capacity and faster service. It is important that any design, permitting, and building of the rail service be completed with an eye towards enhancing or expanding the service in the future.	Double tracking is proposed where necessary for the operation of this project, see Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8. It would not be environmentally or financially prudent to build double track along the entire corridor.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-035.04	Roy Nascimento	<p>In addition, the Chamber also believes that the travel time and frequency of service will be important factors to the success of this project. To provide the greatest impact, we urge that travel time from the South Coast to Boston South Station be no more than 70 minutes. Shorter commuting time gives businesses greater access to more workers with specialized skills, while residents of the region gain connectivity to employment opportunities along the Route 128 corridor and in the business districts of Boston. We also encourage full service throughout the day to meet demand and encourage ridership. A minimum of three trains in the morning peak period and three trains in the afternoon peak period should be utilized. This includes full weekend service and inter-city service between Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River to encourage regional mobility. We would also like to see a late evening train service to Boston to be considered for residents and visitors. Weekend and evening service would help support our growing tourism economy by connecting the Boston area to our new hotel, our national park, our ferry service to Martha's Vineyard, and our vibrant arts and restaurant scene here in the South Coast.</p>	<p>The alternatives design and operating plans have been refined to improve travel times.</p>
H-035.05	Roy Nascimento	<p>The Chamber believes commuter rail extension is critical to economic development and growth in the region and in keeping with long-range "Smart Growth" planning strategies that support the environment and encourage development around priority development areas. Commuter rail extension to the South Coast will also help meet existing and future demand for public transportation and enhance regional mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors to the region by reducing congestion and increasing travel choice.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-035.06	Roy Nascimento	On behalf of our Chamber member businesses and their thousands of employees, we encourage the Army Corps and its partners to complete the review and make the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) as quickly as possible. This is an important project for the South Coast region. The cities of Fall River and New Bedford are some of the largest municipalities within a 50-mile radius of Boston without rail transit service, service that will provide a much needed link between job opportunities and affordable housing for the residents of the state. We have been waiting for the restoration of this rail service for more than two decades, and we are anxious for this process to be completed, so that the state can move on to the next critical step in the project.	Thank you for your comment.
H-036.01	Melanie-Jane Deware	The Easton Historical Commission vehemently opposes the proposed commuter rail service through our town for many reasons, including its negative impact on numerous historic district and sites.	Thank you for your comment.
H-036.02	Melanie-Jane Deware	The proposed route will bisect the North Easton Village National Register District, the Richardson National Landmark District, and the Ames Local Historic District. Its proximity to these districts as well as their associated buildings will cause irreparable harm to them. The project is ill-conceived on many levels. History cannot be mitigated.	Cultural resource impacts and mitigation are addressed in Chapter 4.8.
H-036.03	Melanie-Jane Deware	The promised increase in revenue to local towns will not happen. How many people south of Raynham commute to Boston daily? The Taunton bus that transported folks from Fall River to Boston was cancelled due to lack of ridership. Do people from Fall River or New Bedford want to commute 1 1/2 hours each way, every day, to go to work? A 2009 report based on federal census data showed that only 1.4 percent of the Fall River workforce took public transportation to work. Are the people who make up their above-average unemployment rate qualified for and able to afford the trip into Boston for jobs which don't even exist?	The ridership projections are based on many factors, including forecasts of future population and employment growth, the travel preferences of individuals in the region, and other transportation improvements assumed to be in place by the 2035 analysis year (see Section 3.2.20).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-036.04	Melanie-Jane Deware	Using Brockton as an example: With three commuter stations, where are the promised mixed-use developments that the state predicted would magically appear around them? Associated data there shows that their residents' use of public transportation has not increased since the stations were built in 1997. The city's crime rate has increased. Could there be a connection?	With respect to Transit Oriented Development, it is recognized that transit access is only one of many factors that influence land development decisions (other factors including economic conditions, local land use regulations, infrastructure, environmental constraints etc.). Development of any particular area cannot be guaranteed or predicted with certainty. Nevertheless, the improved accessibility provided by the project is expected to encourage a greater proportion of future growth to occur in the vicinity of station areas on a regional basis and MassDOT will implement a monitoring and reporting program that will include transit oriented development metrics (see Chapter 5). Development in specific areas/parcels near stations is not guaranteed, but the overall effect of rail transit on land use surrounding stations has been well studied (see Section 4.3.3.1 for summary of literature related to impacts on property values, which is a proxy measure for development potential).
H-036.05	Melanie-Jane Deware	There are also a myriad of safety issues regarding grade crossings, a severe lack of safe and adequate parking, and permanent damage to the Hockomock Swamp to consider as well.	At-grade crossing safety is addressed in Chapter 4.1. The Hockomock Swamp is addressed in several chapters of the FEIS/FEIR, including open space, biodiversity, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species.
H-036.06	Melanie-Jane Deware	The whole idea is a bad one. Not enough people will use this rail line; it will cost billions that we don't have (funneling money from other pressing needs for repairs to roads and bridges and funding our schools); and it will create more unfunded maintenance costs. Additionally, the damage to local, state, and national historic sites will be devastating. Once our history is gone, it's gone. We urge you to reconsider this proposal and spare Easton and our neighbors from the costs and devastation to our history, environment, and communities.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.01	Priscilla Chapman	<p>On behalf of Mass. Audubon, I submit the following preliminary comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report, (DEIS/R) for the South Coast Rail Project, based on our review to date. Additional detailed comments will be submitted prior to the end of the public comment period. Mass Audubon is an abutter to the project through its ownership of the 954-acre Assonet Cedar Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary in Lakeville which would be crossed by the proposed project. We have followed this project since 1997 and submitted previous comments to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office and the Army Corps of Engineers, and we have participated in the Commuter Rail Task Force since 2007.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-037.02	Priscilla Chapman	<p>Mass. Audubon generally supports commuter rail improvements as an alternative to highway expansion and as a means to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. We support the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan that identifies Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas as a means to achieve concentrated development on appropriate land in close proximity to transit and other infrastructure, preserve habitat, and reduce vehicle-miles traveled. At the same time, this project bears careful review as it involves potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to wetlands of high ecological significance and habitat for a number of state-listed species. This review needs to include sufficient information to ensure that impacts to those resources are avoided and minimized as much as possible and that unavoidable impacts are adequately mitigated as required by federal and state environmental laws.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.03	Priscilla Chapman	Recognizing that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation has identified the Stoughton Route as its "preferred alternative," we focus our comments on the resource areas and projected impacts associated with that route, including resources and impacts associated with the Southern Triangle of existing freight lines from Taunton to New Bedford and Fall River that are proposed to be upgraded, and the extent to which the DEIS/R demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWPA), the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and the state and federal Clean Water Acts (CWA).	Thank you for your comment.
H-037.04	Priscilla Chapman	Summary. The DEIS/R does not provide adequate baseline information regarding potentially impacted natural resources, detailed mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts, and a detailed blueprint for implementation of the Corridor Plan to demonstrate that projected benefits of the Plan will materialize. The Scope for the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review required that the Draft EIR include a detailed wetlands and rare species mitigation plan, but the DEIS/R states that the mitigation plan will be prepared at a later date. For these reasons, we request that you require preparation of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Report (SDEIS/R). The following comments summarize our concerns. We will submit additional detailed comments by the end of the comment period.	The level of detail on mitigation options in the DEIS/DEIR was appropriate for the range of alternatives under consideration at that time. The mitigation plans have been refined for this FEIS/FEIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.05	Priscilla Chapman	<p>Baseline information. The DEIS/R fails to provide adequate baseline information regarding important resources and impacts to those resources by the project, especially in the Southern Triangle portion of the rail corridor. In addition to Mass. Audubon's land, the Southern Triangle lines also run through other sensitive areas, including public conservation lands owned by the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation in the Acushnet Cedar Swamp (an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and a National Natural Landmark). The Scope for the DEIS/R requires information on the number and location of stream crossings associated with each alternative (p. 27). During a site visit to the portion of the rail line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp on November 16, 2011, conducted by three Mass. Audubon staff members, Project Director Kristina Egan, and other project staff, several culverts and streams that flowed along the right-of-way (ROW) were observed that are not identified in the DEIS/R. Although the Southern Triangle involves refurbishment and improvement of existing freight lines rather than entirely new construction as in other portions of the project, it is nonetheless important to document resources and impacts along this portion of the route. In particular, it is important that the boundary between existing rail berms and wetlands be defined in relation to actual plans for the rail upgrading work so that impacts can be properly estimated and that the condition of culverts and bridges where water flows under the berm be documented to identify where these structures would need to be replaced. In this section of our comments on the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), we requested that the proponent complete a survey of all streams and culverts along the ROW. We reiterate that request. The DEIS/R should also provide construction details of all stream crossings where work is proposed to allow full evaluation of potential impacts.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.14 and Appendix 4.14-A provide detailed information on stream crossings. Each bridge will be replaced and each culvert will be evaluated for replacement for engineering purposes. All structures that would be replaced will be evaluated to determine if meeting Stream Crossing Standards can be accomplished within the engineering constraints of a high-speed rail line as well as, where appropriate, without altering the hydrology of adjacent wetlands. Recommendations for each culvert are provided in Appendix 4.14-A; engineering and hydraulic analyses will be conducted during preliminary and final design.</p>



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.06	Priscilla Chapman	<p>Rare species and vernal pool surveys. The MEPA Scope required that "the DEIR should include an endangered species impact analysis based on adequate species survey and habitat assessment for each alternative based on consultations with NHESP..." It also called for consultations with NHESP, Mass. Audubon, and other impacted conservation landowners in determining which areas should be field surveyed for wetlands and rare species (p. 24). To the best of our knowledge, no rare species surveys were conducted in sensitive areas along the existing New Bedford and Fall River ROWS, including the Assonet and Acushnet Cedar Swamps; nor can we find any record of consultation with NHESP or conservation landowners in the DEIR. The MEPA Scope also required that the DEIR "identify potential vernal pools, initially using maps and aerial photography and then verify in the field ..." It stated that "Potential vernal pool identification and certification should be conducted for areas within the right-of-way of the rail alignment and within a reasonable distance of the ROW ... The DEIR should include the result of vernal pool investigations, including a description and mapping of those meeting the criteria for certification" (p. 26). It appears that no new vernal pool investigation was conducted for the Southern Triangle. Table 4.14-5, "Vernal Pools Within 100 Feet of South Coast Rail Alternatives" lists no vernal pools on the New Bedford line in the Assonet or Acushnet Cedar Swamps. At least one and possibly two potential vernal pools were observed on the portion of the line that crosses the Assonet Cedar Swamp during the above-referenced site visit.</p>	<p>No rare species surveys were required by NHESP, the agency with jurisdiction over these species. As described in Chapter 4.14, Biodiversity, fieldwork conducted for the DEIS/DEIR was supplemented by additional fieldwork in 2010, 2011, and 2012, and determined that numerous vernal pools, including NHESP certified and potential vernal pools, occur near the railroad embankment and in other locations within the Study Area.</p>
H-037.07	Priscilla Chapman	<p>Our written comments will provide a complete list of additional baseline information that should be included in an SDEIS/R, as required by the MEPA scope.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.08	Priscilla Chapman	Impacts associated with the Stoughton Alternative. The DEIS/R indicates that impacts associated with construction of the Stoughton Alternative will include: 11.9 acres of permanent wetlands alteration; Filling of 1.7 acres of vernal pool and loss of 55 acres of supporting vernal pool buffer habitat; 3,480 feet of permanent alteration of bank; Diversion of an intermittent stream that runs along the existing berm; Loss of 32.5 acres of rare species habitat, including loss of Atlantic White Cedar Swamp that provides habitat for Hessel's Hairstreak butterfly, a state-listed species; Barrier impacts to blue-spotted salamander and Blanding's turtle, both state-listed species.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.09	Priscilla Chapman	<p>The DEIS/R utilizes the University of Massachusetts "Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System" (CAPS) model to measure the loss of ecological integrity and biodiversity that would result from each alternative. Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to support plants and animals and the natural processes necessary to sustain them over the long term. The CAPS model creates a grid over the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and calculates the "index of ecological integrity" for each cell of the grid based on eight different ecological factors. The analysis indicates that the Stoughton Alternative would result in a major loss of ecological integrity. This loss would be 456.9 units, compared to 324.8 units for the Attleboro Alternative and zero for Rapid Bus. The CAPS analysis attributes a large portion of this loss to "indirect impacts." Habitat within the Hockomock Swamp has regenerated along the alignment of a rail line abandoned many decades ago - with the rails and ties removed and vegetation regrowing to close the canopy in many locations. As the DEIS/R so clearly demonstrates, the proposed project is much more than reactivation of a former rail corridor. Reconstruction of the railbed in the Hockomock Swamp would cut through "the largest unfragmented and pristine area of wetland habitat in eastern Massachusetts" (p. 4.14-6). Impacts are likely to include introduction of invasive plants, opportunistic predators, and changes in temperature of vernal pools and wetlands adjacent to the track from the creation of an opening in the canopy through the Hockomock Swamp. Regarding impacts to the Pine Swamp, the DEIS/R states "Reconstructing the rail could create a barrier to the movement of vernal pool organisms between pools or between breeding and non-breeding habitat;" also that "Reconstructing the track to require vegetation removal which could alter the microclimate of vernal pools close to the track" (P 4.14-87).</p>	<p>The CAPS analysis is included the FEIS/FEIR, as one measure of effects on ecological integrity. The limitations of the CAPS analysis are also discussed (such as not taking into account existing ATV use through the Hockomock Swamp).</p> <p>The commenter is correct that the canopy has closed over much of the ROW, particularly south of the existing power line that also bisects the swamp. However, the swamp is most accurately described as fragmented (not pristine) under existing conditions as the ROW (possibly in combination with State Route 138) has permanently altered the hydrology as demonstrated by the fact that Atlantic white cedar is confined to the west side of the ROW. CAPS does not measure or account for this existing effect.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.10	Priscilla Chapman	<p>Induced growth. The DEIS/R also identifies projected impacts of induced growth and development from the project, compared to the "no build" scenario. Examples of the projected impacts are: increased vehicle miles traveled (VMTs); increases in greenhouse gas emissions related to new dispersed development, and loss of forest and farmland. The Stoughton Alternative would add 75,422 VMTs per day and 20,750 tons per year of greenhouse gas emissions and would increase loss of forestland by 575 acres and loss of farmland by 313 acres over the "no-build" alternative. The DEIS/R acknowledges the likelihood that loss of forestland would also result in loss of carbon sequestration but does not quantify additional greenhouse gas emissions increases that would result as it should.</p>	<p>Various studies have attempted to quantify the role of forests in helping to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, but the analysis is complex and depends on multiple variables, many of which are poorly understood. The carbon sequestration capacity of individual tree species, the age of forests, the volume of trees cut down, and soil disturbance are a few examples of multiple factors that would affect carbon emissions in a certain area. Because it is very complex and not well understood, quantitative analysis of carbon sequestration was not undertaken for the South Coast Rail alternatives.</p>
H-037.11	Priscilla Chapman	<p>The DEIS/R states that these impacts would be reduced by implementation of the Corridor Plan and evaluates the degree of mitigation provided by "high" and "low" implementation scenarios. Mass Audubon supports vigorous implementation of the Corridor Plan. We are concerned that the DEIS/R fails to provide a detailed blueprint for that implementation to document that impacts of induced growth will, in fact, be offset, and other projected benefits will be provided. We request that a detailed implementation plan be developed and included in an SDEIS/R which includes a demonstrated financial commitment to the needed state, regional, and local planning and land use regulatory reforms that will be needed to fully implement the Corridor Plan.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Corridor Plan is discussed in Section 5.5.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-037.12	Priscilla Chapman	Mitigation plans. Despite the significance of the projected impacts, the DEIS/R fails to provide mitigation plans to replace lost resources and their functions and values. Without the opportunity to review proposed mitigation plans, the public is unable to evaluate whether the project satisfies regulatory standards of the MWPA, MESA, and the state and federal CWA. The MEPA Certificate on the ENF for this project specifically required detailed description of proposed mitigation measures for impacts to rare species (p. 24), wetlands (p. 27) and biodiversity and wildlife (p. 29).	Additional mitigation information is provided in the FEIS/FEIR.
H-037.13	Priscilla Chapman	In some cases projected impacts may be difficult to mitigate. For example, attempts to replicate or restore Atlantic White Cedar Swamp have yielded mixed results in the past. Vernal pool species that encounter barriers to migration may not relocate to other pools. Rare species such as Blanding's turtle may decline if habitat is fragmented. Invasive plants, once introduced, may be difficult to remove without continuous monitoring. The NEPA/MEPA review should acknowledge the difficulties of these challenges and provide detailed mitigation plans with an evaluation of the likelihood of success in an SDEIS/R.	Mitigation plans for the South Coast Rail project have been further developed for the FEIS/FEIR, as described in Chapter 7, and are based on the current level of project design. Section 7.4 of that chapter presents MassDOT's mitigation commitments. Detailed and specific mitigation measures will be developed as the project design is advanced.
H-037.14	Priscilla Chapman	Project cost and mitigation. The MEPA Certificate required that the DEIS/R provide a detailed analysis of costs, including construction, operation and mitigation costs, for each of the alternatives (emphasis added), as well as an assessment of costs associated with implementation of the smart growth aspects of the project (p. 16). As noted above, the document lacks mitigation plans. The cost of mitigation cannot be estimated without the mitigation plans. The Certificate also required the DEIS/R to address how the project and the Corridor Plan will be financed; this analysis is not provided. An SDEIS/R should include the full cost of mitigation in total project costs and an explanation of how the project and Corridor Plan will be financed.	Detailed cost estimates for mitigation cannot be estimated at this time because the specific mitigation sites have not been selected from the options presented in Chapter 4.16.
H-038.01	Scott W. Lang	I want to speak in favor of the South Coast Rail Project. I want to speak in favor of the Hockomock Route. I want to lay it out very, very quickly for you.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-038.02	Scott W. Lang	<p>The first thing that I want to emphasize is that this is a very important economic development project for our area. It is also an important project for the state.</p> <p>This will provide immediate jobs in the planning and building of the rail and then provide jobs along the rail itself. It will allow us to move individuals rapidly north and south. Eventually we would hope that the United States would continue to build and will go east and west as well.</p> <p>We believe it moves passengers as well as freight. We have looked at this project for a very long period of time. We are now one of the fastest growth areas in the state, and it's absolutely something that's vital to continue this economic development.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-038.03	Scott W. Lang	<p>The second thing that I would like to say is that this is a matter of social, economic, and environmental justice for everyone in the state. If you traveled on 195, 140, 24, 93, you know that that -- that these roadways, in essence, will be obsolete with \$4-a-gallon gasoline, with the fact that we have tremendous concerns about the environment, and the fact that it is nearly impossible to move, without denigrating the quality of life of all our citizens because of the time frames involved. Having rapid mass transportation by way of rail from our section of the state, north/south is extremely important.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-038.04	Scott W. Lang	<p>The last or the number of other things that I want to say is that we don't believe an extension is warranted. We've been waiting for this project for decades, and we believe a May 27th deadline is completely appropriate. This entire project has been open, transparent, and public engagement has started from the first day, about four years ago.</p> <p>I've been to so many meetings in which the public's been involved, in which routes have been vetted, checked, that it would not be right to continue with an extension.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-038.05	Scott W. Lang	<p>The other thing that I will say -- and I've got a yellow light now -- is that we don't want an iron horse built. This is the 21st Century. We believe electric, fast start, fast stop, get us to Boston or get us north quickly.</p> <p>Environmentally friendly is appropriate. This rapid mass transit by way of rail, to go by diesel continues to have us depend on oil, have us continue to pollute the environment. It doesn't make sense, and 10 years later we'll be looking to try and convert to electric trains.</p> <p>So let's build a 21st Century product with the tech that has people, as I've said before, from Tokyo saying I want to ride the rail from New Bedford to Boston.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-038.06	Scott W. Lang	So I thank you. This is of utmost importance for our region, and we hope that you will act expeditiously and favorably to this project.	Thank you for your comment.
H-039.01	Mark Montigny	<p>I understand last night that there was some folks who did what we all tend to do express some frustration. I think not in my backyard is a natural instinct. I'd like to suggest tonight that you'll hear from folks that are passionate and are saying, please, put it in our backyard.</p> <p>We've been saying it for decades, some of us, in my case, longer than I care to admit. I will just cite a couple of instances so you'll understand that although we're excited and passionate, we're also frustrated.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-039.02	Mark Montigny	In 1991, Governor Weld looked at me at a podium when I was President of the Fall River Chamber of Commerce and said if you don't have commuter rail by 1997, sue me. I've been looking to sue his trust fund for over a decade. It hasn't worked.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-039.03	Mark Montigny	In two thousand -- excuse me -- in 1993, the Secretary of Transportation said sure, Senator, if you can earmark the money for a study, we will gladly study the Attleboro Alternative, and then two years later, you can do it again if that doesn't work, and we'll study the Stoughton Route, and I said, no thank you and earmarked three and a half million dollars, and we studied these alternatives that you are looking at tonight, in 2011. So we are frustrated.	Thank you for your comment.
H-039.04	Mark Montigny	A succession of governors didn't include the Army Corps unfortunately. This governor, a true champion of the project, was wise enough to understand that it required cooperation.	Thank you for your comment.
H-039.05	Mark Montigny	I want to say one thing very clearly. It's been studied to death. We ask you not to extend the comment period. We ask you to do as you're capable. We know you're thorough, and we will win from that, but we ask you to do this within the year, and we know that you can do it in even less time.	Thank you for your comment.
H-039.06	Mark Montigny	There is no question in our minds because we've participated in literally hundreds of meetings and watched this study after study by very competent environmental experts. The Stoughton Route is the alternative. The Whittenton -- I'll call it the Whittenton Delay Option is not a feasible alternative.	Thank you for your comment.
H-039.07	Mark Montigny	And the only thing that we would ask understand that we truly believe that this is not only an issue of economic justice. We understand what it will do, and I will say to you unequivocally it is the most important economic project for this region. I would suggest also looking at the environmental aspects. There is nothing that will do more to take thousands of cars off the road every day than this project.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-039.08	Mark Montigny	And, lastly, quoting economists that sat before me as the Chairman of Ways and Means in the Senate and suggested the singular -- singularly the biggest challenge to the economic development of Massachusetts, not the South Coast, was, in fact, the lack of growth in the workforce because of a congested capital city and a cost of living that was unbearable for most; and they suggested, without provocation from me as a champion of this project, that commuter rail to the South Coast for a variety of reasons would help solve that issue. So I close by again thanking you for your indulgence, but I ask that you expedite the process. We have waited far too long. The project works. It is necessary, and we need it quickly.	Thank you for your comment.
H-040.01	Antonio Cabral	I'm here to support the South Coast Rail. We've been working on this project, as the Senator said, for several decades now. We don't believe that the date of May 27 should be extended, and we believe strongly that the Stoughton Route is the most effective, the most cost-effective, the most fastest route for us to get to Boston, and we don't need any buses. We have already buses from New Bedford and I believe from all the other cities in Southeastern Mass.	Thank you for your comment.
H-040.02	Antonio Cabral	<p>This project would mark a turning point for us. It's certainly, as the Mayor said, one of the biggest economic projects that we could have in our region and in our city, particularly, New Bedford. As you know, the Cities of New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton are the only cities of their size in the eastern half of Massachusetts without rail service of any kind.</p> <p>How can you have cities like ours not connected to the biggest city, not only in Massachusetts, the biggest city in New England, the biggest economic engine of New England. It's like we were saying all roads used to lead to Rome, but we need to be connected to Boston by rail.</p>	Thank you for your comment. Economic revitalization and smart growth were among the potential project benefits considered by USACE in the EIS/EIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-040.03	Antonio Cabral	There's no other -- there is no coincidence why we have some of the highest unemployment rates in New England. This project will allow our cities to take advantage of our many strengths, to build our prosperity, based on our strengths, as the mayor has said and others have said before.	Thank you for your comment.
H-040.04	Antonio Cabral	I want to briefly address the concerns you heard last night in Mansfield. I can understand the disappointment of someone who took the risk of purchasing a home along existing railroad tracks, hoping that the tracks wouldn't be used. They used to be used only a few years ago. The last time the rail was used was 1959.	Thank you for your comment.
H-040.05	Antonio Cabral	<p>No one likes to lose the battle, but I believe the opposition of those living along the tracks, the northern stretch of the proposed Stoughton Route, does not reflect views even of a majority of those community residents, much less the majority of our region's residents.</p> <p>In 2007, the residents of both Raynham and Easton voted against opposing this project through a local referendum, directed their elected leaders to instead work with the state to mitigate any impact to their communities.</p>	USACE considered the views of all the comments received during the environmental review process. However, the federal review of the project is based on USACE's permitting requirements (summarized in Section 2.3) and not a popular vote or polling of project support/opposition.
H-040.06	Antonio Cabral	<p>As for Environmental Impacts, your report makes clear that the actual impact to the land and wetlands are much smaller than even the projects' strongest supporters, like myself, believe. You point out, for instance, that the project would affect only, only half of an acre of wetlands in the Hockomock Swamp.</p> <p>On the other hand, the project would take more than 8,000 cars off the roads of Southeastern Massachusetts every day and eliminate 62,000 tons of CO2 from our atmosphere.</p>	<p>Due to the proposed trestle, the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives would impact 0.2 acres of wetlands in the Hockomock Swamp (see Section 4.16.9.5).</p> <p>The updated greenhouse gas reduction benefit under the Stoughton Electric Alternative is a decrease of 61,000 tons per year of carbon dioxide from mobile sources (see Table 4.9-20).</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-041.01	Stephen Canessa	Please keep in mind that when -- there are some folks who may be opposed in this process who already benefit from rail service. The New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton region currently do not benefit from this service, and I certainly think that is something that our region does deserve.	Thank you for your comment.
H-041.02	Stephen Canessa	We've expressed the frustration at times regarding the length of time of this process; however, I do want to very sincerely thank you and show my extreme appreciation for the thoroughness and the detail that you put into this, what as I think have been a -- the two-year DEIS project. I do think that in the long run, that will be an extreme benefit for all of us in this region.	Thank you for your comment.
H-041.03	Stephen Canessa	I do want to go on record in support of the Stoughton Extension for a variety of reasons, which includes economic development, accessibility for the residents of this area, and also educational opportunities, which could be achieved for the residents of this area in the greater Boston region.	Thank you for your comment.
H-042.01	Christopher Markey	I'm educated as a lawyer, and I look at things and try to be as logical as I can, and I know you, your group, the Army Corps has taken a lot of heat for the extension of the time of your evaluations and your report. However, I must say that that time, I think, in the end -- at the end of the day is going to be the savior and the effort that you put into it in preventing significant litigation for this case -- this project.	Thank you for your comment.
H-042.02	Christopher Markey	The thoroughness of that, the ability for you to dissect the entire project in bits and pieces, and at the end of the day when you look at the Stoughton line, and you realize that it's only impacting one half acre of wetlands is significant.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-042.03	Christopher Markey	And I think that everyone should be grateful for the opportunity that you have given us to review those documents and to take a look at the opportunity -- the opportunities that exist; and I would just say to you the environment will not be hindered or would not be affected to the degree if it went down to the Attleboro line or the Middleborough line. The most effective, both environmentally and economically, is the Stoughton line; and I would just say from the history of the Army Corps and if anybody understands the economic impact of a significant state and federal infrastructure development it is the Army Corps.	Thank you for your comment.
H-042.04	Christopher Markey	I said it during my most recent campaign, if you look about 25 miles to the east of us, the Cape Cod Canal, those bridges were built before we even had highways, before most people even had cars. The idea now that we're going to develop some type of commuter rail all the way down to New Bedford when every other area has it, it's not novel. It is simply the most effective way for our state to develop, and it's the most effective way for our community to seek serious, serious economic development, something that will tie us into Boston.	Thank you for your comment.
H-042.05	Christopher Markey	I hope that you seriously consider the Stoughton line. I think it's the most effective way environmentally and economically; and I gratefully, on behalf of my constituents, thank you for making such a thorough document that's going to push this thing forward. Thanks again for your time and efforts.	Thank you for your comment.
H-043.01	Charles Crowley	Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here to speak to you again on my support, my enthusiastic support for South Coast Rail for Southeastern Massachusetts.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-043.02	Charles Crowley	It is -- we look forward in Taunton to be the gateway to the South Coast because the one thing that I've emphasized here everyone talks about it having the benefit it will be for us here down in the South Coast to get to Boston to enjoy the amenities there, but I think there's so many qualities in Southeastern Massachusetts that we believe that many people from Boston should be able to come down to enjoy those qualities that we have down here, the attractions down here. Let's expose those elements in here, in Southeastern Mass., to the people in Boston, and I think they'll enjoy what we have down here.	Thank you for your comment.
H-043.03	Charles Crowley	But I'm enthusiastically in support, along with my constituents, for the Stoughton Route, the direct Stoughton Route. It has been a railroad bed, a railroad coming through there since 1845, all the way down to the last train in 1959, the last passenger train. It's gone through the Hockomock Swamp. It's not like we're putting a path through the swamp that has been, you know, on a virgin type of swamp area. It's been there since 1845, and far more detrimental locomotives, from an environmental standpoint, than they have today. So we believe that's the most attractive route.	Thank you for your comment.
H-043.04	Charles Crowley	If it takes me an hour and 15 minutes to go through one of these obscure routes like Attleboro and the Whittenton Alternative to get to Boston, and it's quicker for me to get the car, I'm going to still take the car; so, all the investment will be worth nothing.	<p>The Stoughton Alternatives would provide the fastest travel time to Boston and consequently the highest ridership (see Chapter 4.1).</p> <p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration (although for reasons unrelated to ridership), see Section 3.1.5.1.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-043.05	Charles Crowley	It makes sense to build the direct route through the Stoughton Route, and that's the one we enthusiastically endorse. The Attleboro Route has 15 grade crossings. If we were to take that, plus the time element there, it would devastate our community as it would crisscross the area where -- a highly congested area where the houses are virtually as close as if you put the train down the corridor here. The houses are right there. You can stick your hand out the train, you'll probably hit the houses. The mitigation efforts on that would be enormous, in my opinion.	At-grade crossing impacts along the Attleboro Secondary under the Whittenton Alternatives were evaluated in Chapter 4.1. The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.
H-043.06	Charles Crowley	The Whittenton Alternative is 14 grade crossings in our city and crisscrosses the city. It would interfere with public safety response vehicles, ambulances, and so forth like that in our community.	Delay caused by at-grade crossings was considered and mitigation developed to address adverse impacts (see Chapter 4.1). With mitigation incorporated, no measurable change in emergency response times is anticipated.
H-043.07	Charles Crowley	The Stoughton Route only has five grade crossings, and it adds two stations, one for the downtown area, the historic district, where it would be, as well as the regional station behind the Target store. It would allow people to be able to take advantage of this, not only locally but regionally.	The difference in at-grade crossings between the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives was considered in the alternatives analysis.
H-043.08	Charles Crowley	I thank you, and count me as absolutely in favor of this, along with our 56,000 people from the City of Taunton.	Thank you for your comment.
H-044.01	Jean Fox	I am personally in favor of an electric train along the Stoughton Route.	Thank you for your comment.
H-044.02	Jean Fox	I'm not in favor of any extension of the public comment period as all salient information has been available since the fall of 2009, with little, if any, new information since that time being made available. Any delay will negatively impact access to important federal funding	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-044.03	Jean Fox	<p>South Coast Rail is South Coast Renaissance. It's the rebirth of this nation's vitality and promise. It means accessibility. It means jobs. It opens up the region to tremendous economic development potential, connecting employers and businesses to our most noteworthy resource, our human resource. For the first time in close to a century, it provides a public link between the South Coast and the rest of the state.</p> <p>For the region's workforce and economy, commuter rail is a boon. It offers jobs, transportation options, reciprocal connectivity, and an important economic shot in the arm with implications that stretch far beyond the South Coast.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-044.04	Jean Fox	For station sites, South Coast Rail has a chance to undertake smart growth -- smart growth strategies that weave development with cultural heritage all within the parameters of community engagement and environmental stewardship, through the identification of priority development and priority protection areas.	Thank you for your comment.
H-044.05	Jean Fox	<p>South Coast Rail has already proven its mettle, bringing key stakeholders to the table, promoting smart growth, assessing public transit in the aggregate, rather than in silos, encouraging extensive public comment and input. Technical assistance support has allowed Freetown and other communities to move ahead with transit-oriented design and development.</p> <p>New Bedford has three bridges that are being renovated and readied for the train thanks to TIGER grant funding, obtained through South Coast Rail, and for the 31 communities involved, extensive examination of impacts and benefits has been accomplished.</p>	Thank you for your comment. The TIGER-funded bridge replacements in New Bedford are compatible with South Coast Rail, but are a separate project with independent utility.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-045.01	Jane Gonsalves	I'm here to speak in favor of South Coast Rail, and, in particular, the Stoughton Route. I'd like to advise you that the New Bedford City Council has already gone on record in support of South Coast Rail and the Stoughton Route, and if you haven't seen the letters yet, you should be seeing them shortly. We took a vote on that at our last City Council meeting, one of many votes.	Thank you for your comment.
H-045.02	Jane Gonsalves	The City Council of New Bedford has been a strong, staunch supporter of the rail extension to Southeastern Massachusetts. It certainly is an important economic development tool for this area. It will give us the ability to seek more work opportunities in the Boston area. The route, as you know, according to the documents that have already been published, has less environmental impact than other routes and also a quicker travel time.	Thank you for your comment.
H-045.03	Jane Gonsalves	It is a critical, critical piece of our economic recovery in this area, and I consider it a matter of economic justice for this area, since New Bedford/Fall River are the only cities of their size that do not have access to mass transportation in the form of rail in the State of Massachusetts.	Thank you for your comment.
H-045.04	Jane Gonsalves	I'd also say that the City Council is not in favor of an extension of time for this process. We believe that those documents having been available on the website since the fall of 2009 have given the public adequate opportunity to make comment at this time; and, further, that the delay and extension of time would affect South Coast Rail's ability to access federal transportation funding, and we appreciate your meeting with us in New Bedford, so we can give you our comments here.	Thank you for your comment.
H-046.01	David Kennedy	I wish to express my strong support for the recently completed South Coast Rail DEIR, prepared by the Army Corps. This report is probably the most thorough evaluation of a proposed transportation initiative that I have ever reviewed in my 35 years of public service.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-046.02	David Kennedy	Fifty years ago, the intent of public rail service was simply to connect New Bedford to Boston. The current proposal seeks to establish new economic opportunity along the entire 50-mile corridor. The proposed commuter rail service is being intentionally planned to maximize economic benefit to all 31 communities along its route. This initiative overcomes long-standing environmental justice issues by reestablishing transportation equity to the South Coast just as other gateway communities have benefitted from statewide.	Thank you for your comment. Please see Chapter 4.4 for a discussion of Environmental Justice and Chapter 4.3 for a discussion of Socioeconomic issues.
H-046.03	David Kennedy	The DEIR examines, in great detail, how the most practicable environmental alternative, the proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative is the least damaging solution in creating job access, lessening urban and suburban sprawl, and anticipating the consequences of impending climate change on a regional level.	Thank you for your comment.
H-046.04	David Kennedy	With the uncontrollable rise in fuel prices, there's no better time in American history than the present to move this transportation project forward.	Thank you for your comment.
H-046.05	David Kennedy	New Bedford has recently completed a comprehensive master plan. Consistent with this, plan abundant reference to the reestablishment of commuter rail is acknowledged in the transportation, economic, and educational sections. This particular rail project will complete the City's intermodal port to rail capacity.	The consistency of the South Coast Rail project with New Bedford 2020 is acknowledged.
H-046.06	David Kennedy	The City has also begun a long-awaited rezoning process to become consistent with this proposed rail corridor plan. This effort has produced two transit-oriented development sites here in New Bedford.	Thank you for your comment.
H-046.07	David Kennedy	In closing, I respectfully urge you and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to support this Stoughton Alternative as the Corps continues onward towards the initiation and swift completion of a Final EIR.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-047.01	Derek Santos	The EDC fully supports South Coast Rail, and specifically supports the proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative as the most viable alternative, with the least impact to wetlands and wildlife.	Thank you for your comment.
H-047.02	Derek Santos	<p>As the lead economic development agency for the City of New Bedford, the NBEDC has a mission to work in partnership at the city, state, and federal levels to promote sustainable job retention and creation for New Bedford citizens.</p> <p>To achieve this mission, we are implementing a balanced, aggressive, and multifaceted growth strategy of which the reestablishment of commuter rail service to Boston is a critical component.</p> <p>As such, this project is a central element to our transportation goals outlined in the city's master plan, New Bedford 2020, and will serve as a catalyst for private investment and job creation for decades to come.</p>	The consistency of the South Coast Rail project with New Bedford 2020 is acknowledged. Job creation effects are discussed in Chapter 5.
H-047.03	Derek Santos	The proposed Stoughton Electric Alternative will spur targeted economic growth along the entire corridor, creating 2,000 jobs and 228 million in private investment in New Bedford alone by the project's completion in 2030.	Based on Chapter 5 of the FEIS/FEIR, the project is expected to induce 1,341 jobs in the region (compared to the No-Build condition in 2035). See Table 5.3-2.
H-047.04	Derek Santos	Today we are now constructing three rail bridges for the project through TIGER grant program funds and are implementing new zoning in the areas of two New Bedford station locations that will promote the development of more than 1,700 new housing units, as well as 750,000 square feet of new commercial space.	Thank you for your comment. The TIGER-funded bridge replacements in New Bedford are compatible with South Coast Rail, but are a separate project with independent utility. They are intended to complete necessary maintenance for the active R.O.W. serving existing freight trains on the New Bedford Main Line, regardless of South Coast Rail. The project did not entail discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States and therefore the it did not require authorization by the Corps.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-047.05	Derek Santos	New Bedford and Fall River have long been an underserved region of the state, and the proposed Stoughton Electronic Alternative will support smart growth in urban centers, help protect green fields from development, and provide faster service that serves the greatest amount of passengers.	Thank you for your comment.
H-047.06	Derek Santos	Finally, this project has been fully studied, is well planned, and under the leadership of Governor Patrick, has had a thoughtful civic engagement as a central element to its advancement. We urge that the Final EIS and EIR address only the Stoughton Electric Alternative, as we begin to focus hopefully on the construction of this line from New Bedford to Taunton as soon as possible.	USACE determined the FEIS/FEIR would address the Stoughton and Whittenton Alternatives.
H-048.01	George Smith	First of all, I'd like to put my support behind -- strongly support the Stoughton Electric Alternative. A 70-minute trip is critical to ensure ridership and the success of a commuter rail service to the South Coast.	Updated travel time estimates are presented in Table 3.3-2. The Stoughton Electric Alternative is estimated to take 77 minutes to travel from New Bedford to South Station in the peak period, the fastest travel time of the build alternatives advanced to the FEIS/FEIR.
H-048.02	George Smith	<p>The South Coast is not just about getting to jobs in Boston. It's about connectivity and opening the South Coast region for everyone to enjoy.</p> <p>We have a terrific university, the University of Massachusetts here. We have Bristol Community College. We probably have some of the best beaches besides Cape Cod in the area. There's so many things in New Bedford that people can't get to because we do not have the rail.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-048.03	George Smith	I'm probably not the oldest guy in the building, but I can remember going down to the old train depot we had in New Bedford many years ago and seeing the train there. So it goes back some time. But the train did come through New Bedford, and we're looking forward to it coming again.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-048.04	George Smith	<p>As we mentioned, and it's been mentioned by several people, the master plan, 47 years this city was without a master plan. It was adopted by the planning board in November of 2010.</p> <p>So we do have a master plan, and in that master plan, rail was discussed; and the next step of the master plan, the planning office will undertake a complete revision of the city's zoning code, including the recommendation to establish a transit-oriented development at Whale's Tooth and King's Highway, New Bedford's two local station locations, a recommendation from the South Coast Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan that will protect and preserve our priority preservation areas while enhancing our priority development areas.</p>	The consistency of the South Coast Rail project with New Bedford 2020 is acknowledged.
H-049.01	Ray Medeiros	And I think the only route is a Stoughton Route through the Hockomock Swamp. That's the only route. The Attleboro route, forget it, and the buses, they shouldn't be considered. Nobody wants to go to Boston in a bus.	Thank you for your comment.
H-049.02	Ray Medeiros	Another thing I'd like to say is that these people that use the environmental excuses in the Hockomock Swamp, no matter what they do there, Mother Nature has its way of protecting it and bringing everything back the way it was.	Thank you for your comment.
H-049.03	Ray Medeiros	And as far as animals go, soon as you make noise in there with big equipment, these animals, they're gone.	Thank you for your comment.
H-049.04	Ray Medeiros	<p>Now, there was a woman she wrote in tonight's paper she mentioned the trains are going to affect the wells. How's that going to be? Everybody's well's near the railroad tracks? And she also complained, of course, of the environmental problems in the swamp.</p> <p>These people from Easton, they're just against this thing coming to New Bedford. They're all using excuses, and I don't think we should put up with it.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-050.01	Tridib Roy	As a resident of this area for more than three decades, I honestly and strongly believe that the South Coast Rail is not only a need but a necessity for this region to grow and continue with its full potential to the States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and the nation as a whole.	Thank you for your comment.
H-050.02	Tridib Roy	Number one, it will provide an environment friendly and economic transportation system between this region and Boston, Route 128 belt and beyond. It will reduce pollution from the thousands of commuting vehicles now burning fossil fuel. That means less carbon emissions and less footprint.	Thank you for your comment.
H-050.03	Tridib Roy	Number two, it will also reduce the dependence of imported oil, which is a scarcity these days, and it will save millions of gallons of gasoline each year that is used currently by the commuters in cars and buses.	Thank you for your comment.
H-050.04	Tridib Roy	<p>Number three, South Coast has a large population of skilled workers such as trained plumbers, carpenters, welders, electricians, masonry workers, painters, landscapers, house estimating experts, electronic and computer technology trained technicians, graduating from the local vocational schools and community colleges of this area. There's a valuable human resource. The workforce will be available to work in Boston and Route 128 belt area, where there is a dire need of these services of such a hard-working and skilled workforce.</p> <p>These workers will have a better earning from such employment, and spending their money in this area will inject more economic power to the community of this area, and it will improve the quality of life.</p> <p>This is a win-win situation for both Boston and the Route 128 belt as well as the community of this city.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-050.05	Tridib Roy	Number four, it will bring tourists from different areas. South Coast is endowed with beautiful sight-seeing attractions, with its nice clean city beaches, rivers, and creeks, ponds, and parks, strewn over --	Thank you for your comment.
H-051.01	Ronald Rheaume	I'm a representative with the New England Regional Council of Carpenters. I'm also a person who is a representative of the Southeastern Mass. Building Trades here.	Thank you for your comment.
H-051.02	Ronald Rheaume	<p>I don't know if you know, but there are thousands of people every day who drive to Boston. I personally drove to Boston for two years straight every single day, leaving my home at 4:30, 5:00 in the morning, to get to work at 7:00 in Boston, and facing a two-hour ride home at night when I left Boston at 3:30 in the afternoon.</p> <p>During that time, in those two years, talk about stress, driving with people doing 80 miles an hour, drinking coffee, putting on makeup, and talking on the phone is not something that is very conducive to a smooth day. The ride home was equally as stressful, hours and hours, or if there was an accident on the road or if it was raining or snowing it was just terrible.</p> <p>I literally quit my job after two years of that, after seeing a number of deaths on the highway, I just could not deal with that.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-051.03	Ronald Rheaume	So this is personally to me it's a quality of life issue for the people of the South Coast. Being able to sit on a train, read the paper, drink a coffee, for the ladies put their makeup on, talk on the phone, all much safer than doing it driving 80 miles an hour, up Route 24.	Thank you for your comment.
H-051.04	Ronald Rheaume	I want to talk about the economic impact as well. The South Coast here is poised for great growth. There's a 300-acre bio park opening up in Fall River. First construction should probably start in the fall, and there are a number of projects that, you know, are lined up for the future for the South Coast.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-051.05	Ronald Rheaume	I just think it's totally important and extremely important that we receive the economic justice and the respect that we should have to be able to go anywhere like anyone else in the state on a train, an electric train, through Stoughton.	Thank you for your comment.
H-052.01	Peter Hawes	Yes, I'd like to support the electric rail through the Stoughton Route, and I don't see really any reason for any more delay. I think if we're -- we can save 300,000 car miles a day, that we need to think seriously about that and get this approved as soon as possible.	Thank you for your comment.
H-053.01	Brian Gomes	<p>New Bedford deserves to have the rail here. The people of this city have waited so long. We've been deprived of things that other communities have that have such a rail system. The City of New Bedford can be a showcase to those that live in Boston and outside as they come to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.</p> <p>For too long has the rail been talked about and not achieved. You have that opportunity. We are asking you. It is so important to our recovery. As we progress in this economic situation that has hit the whole country, we look to recover. It's part of our plan.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-053.02	Brian Gomes	And while I have the opportunity I stand here, Kristina Egan, if you're here, the City Council would like to thank you or whoever is responsible for the wall that we talked about when you came to City Council along Purchase Street that now will have the look of a rail the way it's supposed to be and whoever was responsible for that, thank you very much and those of your party.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-053.03	Brian Gomes	Again, the City of New Bedford deserves that rail. We would hope that you would move and do the things that have to be done in order to bring it here because, you know, there's some frogs that may be relocated or some animals or whatever, but, again, as the gentleman said that spoke, the elderly gentleman just a moment ago so many people back, he said that he would like to ride that rail, but he's not sure that it will be here, but he wants it for his grandchildren. We want it for him. He deserves that, to ride on that rail. He's waited a long time. The City of New Bedford has.	Thank you for your comment.
H-054.01	Michael Jolliffe	And, first of all, I'm certainly in favor of the Stoughton Electric Line. There's no question an electric train, as is demonstrated in your presentation, is -- accelerates and decelerates much faster than a diesel train, and if you look at the timing between Boston and various locations, in fact, it is considerably longer to go on the diesel train than the electric train.	Thank you for your comment.
H-054.02	Michael Jolliffe	<p>On top of that, really speed is an important issue as I hear it from my friends who travel to Boston every day. If you go up in the morning during rush hour, it's going to take you anywhere from an hour and 30 minutes to even two hours. My wife, in fact, took two hours getting up there at -- leaving at eight o'clock in the morning. So it is a problem. So speed is an issue.</p> <p>So one of the big issues is the number of stops you have. A friend of mine in France tells me it takes seven minutes for a stop on the TGV. Here I would think every stop is worth five minutes, which means if you stop ten times between New Bedford and Boston, that's 50 minutes, which is a lot of time.</p>	The operating plan presented in Chapter 3 includes skip stop/express service in the peak periods to reduce the number stops and improve travel time.
H-054.03	Michael Jolliffe	So I think there are approaches where, in fact, you do have faster trains and then shuttles between the stations to the transfer stations, which are at high speed that you have an opportunity for everyone to get to Boston in less than 50 minutes, somewhere between 60 and 50 minutes if you follow the speeds and so on that are recorded in your document, the EIR.	The peak period travel time for the Stoughton Electric Alternative is 77 minutes (from New Bedford to South Station). Travel times were calculated based on maximum allowable speeds along the corridor.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-054.04	Michael Jolliffe	On top of that, as you look at the -- between the diesel and the electric, the number of passengers that would take the electric are more than the diesel, and that's a very important factor. So you will get more passengers which, in fact, will be a more economical approach to creating this connection between Boston and New Bedford, so. So that, from an economic point of view, because of the number of those passengers you attract, you'll be much better off.	Thank you for your comment.
H-054.05	Michael Jolliffe	<p>One of the issues I think that is important in your -- in the environmental issue is only having one track in certain portions of this rail connection. You need two tracks, and you're talking really about 14 feet of dimension, as I read it, on your report.</p> <p>So it seems to me that that 14 feet of the pond or whatever it is, is a very, very small proportion of the amount of wetlands that we have.</p>	Portions of the corridor would be single-track, see Figures 3.2-7 and 3.2-8.
H-055.01	Richard Connor	I want to commend Mass. DOT for their careful analysis and conclusion that the Stoughton Rail -- the Stoughton Rail is the way to go. I'm convinced, and it has to be electric. That's a no-brainer. That shouldn't even be open to debate.	Thank you for your comment.
H-055.02	Richard Connor	And it will be used. I often want to go up to Boston for this or that event, and then I sit there and I think about that drive and the traffic and the parking, and I don't go, you know, because, you know, is the event worth all the stress of going up there the three hours at least, going and coming? And if there's a comfortable train that's reasonably fast, I'm on it. I'm on board, and I think a lot of other people will be on board. So we will get the riders, and I hope you expedite this, and we get it soon.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-056.01	James Mathes	<p>I'm here tonight to offer my support for the extension of commuter rail service to New Bedford and Fall River, specifically for the South Coast Rail Project.</p> <p>Additionally, when you reach the appropriate point in this process, I urge you to select the so-called Stoughton Route because it will provide the fastest commuter trip time and the most environmentally -- and it's the most environmentally sound alternative.</p> <p>Further, I hope you will endorse the use of electric trains as opposed to diesel-powered engines so as to maximize the potential of our new rail service.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-056.02	James Mathes	For too long now the South Coast region of Massachusetts has been without the vital transportation services afforded by commuter rail service. This lack of service has adversely impacted our region's economy and quality of life.	Thank you for your comment.
H-056.03	James Mathes	<p>Ironically, the primary opponents of South Coast commuter rail are people living north of us who already have commuter rail service available to them. For decades now they've mounted efforts to deny our region from having a primary transportation system they have been using and enjoying for years.</p> <p>We've listened to their complaints about not wanting South Coast commuter rail trains passing through their towns, yet scores of residents from those very towns who seek to block our efforts climb aboard commuter rail trains every day, trains that pass through other communities on their trips to and from Boston.</p> <p>To be blunt, it's annoying to be on the receiving end of their rather unsophisticated do as I say and not as I do message. Personally, I don't care what they say, but I'm determined to be able to do the same things they're able to do. Nothing more; nothing less.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-056.04	James Mathes	<p>Transportation systems are primary assets that support a community's economy. The Cities of New Bedford and Fall River suffer some of the highest unemployment rates in Massachusetts. There are literally tens of thousands of people who are out of work in our region. These are good, hard-working people who want and deserve the same opportunities to access jobs that are currently available to our northern neighbors presently enjoying the benefit of commuter rail service.</p> <p>It's been a long time since residents have had an opportunity to become involved in an effort to bring commuter rail to our region. That's why there's so many of us here tonight. By every measure commuter rail will be the same powerful economic tool for us as it is in every other Eastern Massachusetts city and town that already has it. We want it too. We need it, and we deserve it.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-057.01	Joseph Lopes	As a life-long resident and member of the New Bedford City Council, if you live in New Bedford for a great time, you're dealing with the largest inequality, and that is the ability to take a train to Boston. As James Mathes said and other people have said, if you live in communities that have it, you don't care about the have-nots. Well, we're the have-nots, and this is for our voice to be heard. So please bring commuter rail to the area.	Thank you for your comment.
H-058.01	Randall Kunz	The Commission unanimously approved a letter, which will be forwarded to you, brief extracts of which are SREPPD, which is the Southeastern Regional Planning District. SREPPD has been deeply involved in this project for a long, long time. SREPPD supports the Stoughton Route, highly recommends electric, recommends against the Whittenton Alternative, and commends speedy completion of the analysis.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-059.01	Melinda Ailes	I've heard that there have been requests for an extension for the review period. I would respectfully ask that you deny that request. We've been waiting a very, very long time, and the information has been available public and transparent for well over a year.	Thank you for your comment.
H-059.02	Melinda Ailes	<p>I'd like to voice my support for the South Coast Rail Project and the Stoughton Electric Alternative.</p> <p>As your report shows, the Stoughton Alternative is clearly the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative for a project that is critical for the economic development throughout the entire region.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-059.03	Melinda Ailes	We need the rail as a key component of smart growth and economic development, and to rectify the decades of economic injustice that has been obvious in this region.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-060.01	Jeffrey Pontiff	<p>Thirteen years ago, I moved to New Bedford. I'm a commercial real estate broker. I've watched over a hundred million dollars been invested in just our downtown over the last 13 years. I've watched our store front vacancy rates go from 70 percent of vacancy to 90 percent of occupancy.</p> <p>I've watched this city go from, for me personally, it was why would you ever move to New Bedford to becoming one of the coolest -- and I can use that, Jim, because I've got gray hair -- coolest cities on the South Coast, and certainly in Southeastern Massachusetts.</p> <p>My point is this: I brokered probably a good portion of the transactions that have occurred in this city revolving -- involving those developments, and I don't say that as bragging but maybe just to give some credence to my comments.</p> <p>I firmly believe -- and this is the point I want to make -- that we will not sustain the growth that we have had over the last 10, 13 years unless we get a more affluent populous here, and the only way -- and it's been proven by the other gateway cities, as has previously been mentioned tonight -- the way to do that is through commuter rail; so, for me, it's plain and simple. For us to continue on our success, we need that commuter rail.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-061.01	Kreg Espinola	<p>I'd just like to start out by thanking you all for coming today. It's incredibly important. As you can hear from the testimony, this project is incredibly important to the South Coast. I think it's equally important to the rest of the state so that they can be connected to us, as important it is for us to be connected to them.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-061.02	Kreg Espinola	I'd like to mention about approximately ten years ago, I think, I testified in Taunton at a hearing for South Coast commuter rail. The issue has been vetted. You know, I think Senator Montigny had indicated it was 20 years ago that the issue had come up. We vetted the issue over and over and over again, and I think that the support is clear from the testimony that you've heard today.	Thank you for your comment.
H-061.03	Kreg Espinola	I don't think that I'd like to be here ten years from now with no rail or 20 years from now with kids that don't have the ability to take rail to Boston. So we'd prefer the Stoughton Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.
H-062.01	Candace Heald	For my reading the electric train to the Stoughton pathway seems the clear alternative both for the economic impact, the population served, with the least disruption to domestic and business pursuits.	Thank you for your comment.
H-062.02	Candace Heald	<p>I live in Mattapoisett. There's this wonderful story about Oliver Wendell Holmes who was a great jurist and a summer resident of Mattapoisett. It's said that he took the train at nine o'clock and ended up in his Cambridge office by eleven, did his business, had lunch, and started back at three, and arrived back at five. There was this wonderful train called the Dude Special that served this area, and that would be virtually impossible to do now. There's not the technology. There's not the time, and even if you use your car, it would be virtually impossible to do that.</p> <p>And the point is that the linkages between residents, commerce, and cities of all size has really been fractured; and so in this time of great economic and environmental concern, I would really urge the pathway, the Stoughton pathway and the electric rail to kind of reconnect this area of the South Coast with areas of commerce in cities that were in the 19th century. We're not really moving forward unless we do this. We've regressed entirely.</p>	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-063.01	Bruce Duarte, Jr.	<p>And I just wanted to say that I support obviously this rail for everything that's been stated, including the economic impact, including jobs, including environmental justice, but for me, more than that. I support it because not only do I believe that this rail will connect the South Coast to Boston, but also I believe that it will connect Boston to the South Coast.</p> <p>I believe that we have so much to offer down here, with everything from festivals, to our working waterfront, to the -- to me, the most beautiful city in the South Coast. That's what I believe, we and this project can do is connect the state where it has not been connected before.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-064.01	Stephen Smith	<p>When Governor Patrick came in 2007, four years ago, and announced that he was restarting the process and -- and inviting the Corps of Engineers to be involved, there was a collective groan in this region that here we go again. We've been down this route before. He did relieve our anxiety a little bit by naming Kristina Egan as project manager; but it's been four years now, you have released your study, and I will say the wait has been well worth it. The study is thorough. It may tell us what we thought we knew, but you have left no stone unturned and really looked at the alternatives very well.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-064.02	Stephen Smith	<p>So I want to applaud the work you've done so far, but I want to make three points going forward. First of all, in selecting your LEDPA, please give great consideration to travel time and an alternative that has the lowest travel time. We don't, as Mayor Lang referred to, want another iron horse, and there's a strong correlation between travel time and ridership.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-064.03	Stephen Smith	Secondly, you would think from what we've heard the last couple of decades that the only environmental issue associated with this project is the Hockomock Swamp. Don't forget -- and -- and the important other impacts: the greenhouse gas emissions, the smart -- the important smart growth benefits, and the urban revitalization benefits that you've heard about this evening.	Thank you for your comment.
H-064.04	Stephen Smith	And, finally, don't delay any longer. We've waited a long time. Please move forward as quickly as possible.	Thank you for your comment.
H-065.01	Joshua Freeman	And I'd like to see the US Congress show a financial support of this. I want to see the money here so it can get done.	Thank you for your comment.
H-065.02	Joshua Freeman	I've been trying to start a new business for a long time. I'm having an extremely difficult time. I'd like to see financial support from Congress for people like me to get stuff done.	Thank you for your comment.
H-065.03	Joshua Freeman	I support the Stoughton Route. You should get to New Bedford as quick as possible. The electric train -- Mayor Lang was talking about the Tokyo. They have a fast train there. I know when I was -- after college I went to -- graduated U. Mass. Dartmouth. I went to Spain, and when I was in Madrid, I wanted to go to Seville. I took a train, and it was -- I'm not sure if it was electric or what it was, but all I know is I got there fast. It was far superior to the train system here. I don't see any reason why you can't build an advanced train system like some parts of the world have.	Thank you for your comment.
H-066.01	Anne Louro	New Bedford strongly supports the Stoughton Electric Alternative. Its 70-minute trip is critical to ensure ridership and the success of commuter rail service to the South Coast.	Updated travel time estimates are presented in Table 3.3-2. The Stoughton Electric Alternative is estimated to take 77 minutes to travel from New Bedford to South Station in the peak period, the fastest travel time of the build alternatives advanced to the FEIS/FEIR.
H-066.02	Anne Louro	New Bedford also prefers the electric alternative because it is the most flexible fuel source as it can be converted from solar, wind, and other potential energy sources in the future.	The electric commuter rail alternatives would be powered by the electrical grid, which includes renewables. Examining future trends in the sources of electricity generation was not within the scope of this EIS/EIR.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-066.03	Anne Louro	South Coast Rail is an issue of equity. New Bedford and Fall River are the only cities of their size and population that do not have commuter rail access; yet, we continue to pay taxes, thus supporting public transit for all other regions of the Commonwealth.	The lack of commuter rail access to New Bedford and Fall River was recognized in the purpose and need statement for the project (Chapter 2) and determined the range of alternatives that were considered in the environmental review process.
H-066.04	Anne Louro	<p>South Coast Rail is not about just getting to Boston. It's also for folks to get here as well. New Bedford has many great historical, cultural, and architectural assets, including but not least the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, which is the largest Portuguese feast in the world, and the Buttonwood Park Zoo, one of America's finest small zoos, according to the American Zoological Association.</p> <p>If you go to any thriving community with a strong sense of community in place, you will note that public transportation is critical as it ensures access for everyone to our special places.</p> <p>This year, New Bedford was named a Dozen Distinctive Destination by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and South Coast Rail is the key to providing public transportation to these significant historical and cultural resources.</p>	The build alternatives would improve regional interconnectivity, including transit access to New Bedford attractions cited by the comment.
H-066.05	Anne Louro	<p>In November of 2010, the New Bedford Planning Board adopted the first city master plan since 1964. It's called New Bedford 2020. With an eye on the future, yet valuing our past, this document strongly supports the South Coast Rail Project and both the economic and transportation sections.</p> <p>Over 1,100 people participated in the civic engagement process for this plan, across all ages, races, and ethnicities, continually showing support for commuter rail service to our region.</p>	The consistency of the South Coast Rail project with New Bedford 2020 is acknowledged.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-066.06	Anne Louro	Lastly, I want to stress that this project is about equity, regional connectivity, and access for residents and visitors to experience our unique, authentic, and distinctive region, not just getting to Boston.	Thank you for your comment. Equity concerns were specifically addressed as part of Chapter 4.4- Environmental Justice. Regional connectivity was part of the transportation evaluation of the alternatives presented in Chapter 4.1. The analysis of the project in the environmental review process has considered the full accessibility benefits within the region, not only access to Boston.
H-066.07	Anne Louro	We firmly support the Stoughton Alternative and urge the Army Corps not to extend the comment period, as the technical documents that are the core of the DEIS and DEIR were completed and posted online in the fall of 2009.	Thank you for your comment.
H-066.08	Anne Louro	Further delays continue to limit the project's asset -- excuse me -- access to federal transportation funding since South Coast Rail has to be permitted in order to be eligible to apply for such funding.	Thank you for your comment.
H-067.01	Roger Stanford	<p>We arrived at the Philadelphia Airport, and we proceeded from the terminal to the baggage claim. We picked up our bags and between the terminal and the baggage claim, Philadelphia had commuter rail service that serviced every one of the terminals. We boarded the train, which took us in a fast and efficient manner into Philadelphia. We exited at a train station that was about a block from our hotel.</p> <p>The purpose of what I'm saying is twofold. Number one, this is not just an issue of the South Coast cities and towns. It's also an issue for the Boston metropolitan area. In order for a city like Boston to thrive and grow, there must be a way of getting people into and out of that city.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-067.02	Roger Stanford	Next, it's also not just an economic issue, it is a quality of life issue. The availability of the cultural, sporting, entertainment, and educational opportunities need to be available to people that can get there quickly, and that's the Stoughton Rail Alternative.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-067.03	Roger Stanford	The environmental alternative to building the Stoughton Rail Alternative line is to dump more and more cars onto Route 24, with a negative environmental impact of requiring more and more parking facilities in Boston, expanding the number of lanes on Route 24, burning more and more expensive gasoline, and polluting the air with that gasoline.	Thank you for your comment.
H-068.01	Irene Schall	<p>I'd like to echo the support for the Stoughton line, for that route as well as for the electric train.</p> <p>And I'd like to simply put a face on some of the comments that I think we all have shared and the concerns we have about the economics and the equality issues.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-068.02	Irene Schall	<p>I've recently had the opportunity to travel to both Fitchburg and Lawrence and see in both of those communities their lovely commuter rail stations. Of course, we don't have one.</p> <p>I have also had the opportunity to speak to public officials in the City of Quincy; and for those of you who may not know, the City of Quincy was right behind us in this last census count, and I joke that they were nipping at our heels, so to speak, and the officials said to me, well, it's all about rail, and it's all about the Red line. It's all about connectivity to Boston, and that's what we want, and that's what we deserve.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-068.03	Irene Schall	I, like most other parents, would love to have my children settle close to me. New Bedford is a wonderful place. He has commuted this way for three years, and this was not his choice. It simply is a reality of life. His work draws him to Boston. He would love to be here. The rail would help him do that and would help other people make the same choices. Perhaps they'd like to work in Boston and live in New Bedford or alternatively perhaps we can attract more people to move to New Bedford who haven't yet realized the tremendous advantages that our area brings.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-069.01	David Dennis	I want to just to lend my voice to the support here of many others that you've already heard from tonight by supporting the project and supporting the Hockomock Route for the electric train coming down to the South Coast, and I'm not going to mention all the same reasons, but the environmental reasons, the economic, and the social reasons that are so important to this area.	Thank you for your comment.
H-069.02	David Dennis	One comment that I would like to make and a recommendation, in Fall River there's a tour bus going to be located near Crab Pond, which is also right near the Ponta Delgada gates on the Battleship Cove. That's very close to what we call Crab Pond down there. One consideration may be, at least environmentally, that maybe that terminal could be relocated not very far away, in an area that it is now -- or formerly known as Corrugated Box Company. That may mitigate some of the environmental concerns that you may have.	Alternative station locations were considered earlier in the development of the project (see the Station Location Report, Appendix 3.1-C). No impacts associated with the Battleship Cove Station were identified that would warrant relocating the station at this time.
H-069.03	David Dennis	Please expedite this project. New Bedford, Fall River, all the surrounding cities and towns need the project for all the reasons that are stated. We waited a very, very long time. Sooner in this case is better.	Thank you for your comment.
H-070.01	Jon Mitchell	I'm not going to cover the same economic environmental and psychic arguments that we've heard all night. I will note that what is striking about all of them is that there is near unanimity over a course of the last two hours. We've heard the same thing over and over again. We didn't rehearse this all together. What you're hearing is a real consensus coming out of Southeastern Massachusetts in favor of rail generally and the Stoughton Alternative in particular.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-070.02	Jon Mitchell	<p>I'm employed as a federal prosecutor in Boston, and it's a job -- my job is one that doesn't exist down here. There isn't a federal courthouse in New Bedford unfortunately, and so -- and I've done that commute in any number of ways. I've taken every possible mode of transportation. I drive for the most part. I drive admittedly in an unsafe way because I spend most of my time on a cell phone because I can't otherwise justify an hour-and-30, hour-and-45-minute commute each way without at least getting some work done. I've taken the train out of Lakeville many times, up to three or four times a week, and I've done the bus route.</p> <p>I mention all this because those commutes, invariably the drive during rush hour, the bus, and the train, when you combine all segments: travel to the train stop, the train ride itself, and then the walk to work are all roughly about an hour and 45 minutes, and it isn't sustainable over the course of a career, and we're talking now one of the justifications for extending rail down here or reestablishing rail is to give people career-long jobs in Boston and to be able to live down here. And as you look at the alternatives, the only one that makes any sense at all because there is so much -- it would be such a shorter commute is Stoughton. It really is a no-brainer in that sense. Attleboro, the bus route, the Whittenton route all promise very, very long commutes that people, speaking from experience, cannot sustain in the long run; and so in that way when you couple that fact with the fact that it promises a much lower environmental impact, and it will be cheaper, it really is -- the Stoughton Route is a no-brainer. So I leave you with that.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-071.01	Henry Bousquet	<p>I'm excited to finally get to speak about the great potential that a South Coast Rail line brings to our city. New Bedford was once a mighty economic engine for the State of Massachusetts. With our historic successes in whaling, textiles, and fishing, we were the -- once an enormous bread basket that helped grow our state for decades.</p> <p>New Bedford has suffered the exodus of over 40,000 plus jobs in the last 50 years. We, the people of the South Coast and New Bedford, have paid for billions of dollars in countless other Massachusetts infrastructure projects.</p> <p>We on the South Coast now ask the people of our state to, please, consider helping us build our 80- or 90-minute commute, preferably the Stoughton Electric Route, commute to Boston, and connect the histories of Boston to that of our New Bedford's history for the future and for that future of our children.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-072.01	Thomas LaPointe	I commute 24 daily. It's a major hassle. The City of Fall River's been waiting for commuter rail for over 20 years.	Thank you for your comment.
H-072.02	Thomas LaPointe	The City's suffered economically because of the lack of job opportunities there. The commuter rail would improve that dramatically.	Thank you for your comment.
H-072.03	Thomas LaPointe	<p>I would -- am strongly in favor of the Stoughton Electric Alternative. I -- excuse me -- the NIMBYism from some of the northern communities is getting a little tiring as a delaying tactic it seems. If they delay, they win, and it's a little ironic particularly considering both Stoughton and Easton are noted for beautiful historic railroad stations; so, I appreciate the Army Corps of Engineers' input on this.</p> <p>I think the Hockomock Swamp issue is minor. Particularly with the trestle construction, I think it would have very minor impacts on wildlife there, and, again, I strongly -- you know , the City of Fall River needs commuter rail yesterday.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-072.04	Thomas LaPointe	I think the Hockomock Swamp issue is minor. Particularly with the trestle construction, I think it would have very minor impacts on wildlife there, and, again, I strongly -- you know , the City of Fall River needs commuter rail yesterday.	Thank you for your comment.
H-073.01	Chuck Dade	<p>I would say New Bedford's ready. I mean, they've already started to build the bridges and such. They're waiting for the other end of this to happen, whether it's from Attleboro or Stoughton, but you've already decided that Stoughton is the best economic -- environmental way. The time factor shows it's the most -- it's the best way, and beyond that, you know, diesels are antiques. I mean to me a diesel train would be a look-back. The only way we can really green power our train is to have the electric train because we have -- you know, we're going into a solar now, and if we have electric trains, we can plug into that.</p> <p>Beyond that, New Bedford's ready for that too. New Bedford has Cape Wind coming in. It could probably be up and running by the time the train's running, and if the state negotiated the I commute 24 daily. It's a major hassle. The City of Fall River's been waiting for commuter rail for over 20 years. right deal, half the Cape Wind Power is still available; so we could actually power -- power the train partially at least with Cape Wind.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-074.01	David Oliveira	<p>Like the previous speaker mentioned, I've taken the bus. I've taken the train, and I drive on many occasions. I would say that those are not viable alternatives when considering the Stoughton Rail.</p> <p>The commuting time has gotten to be intolerable. It's not good for families. It takes -- it can wind up being a 12-hour day or longer.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-074.02	David Oliveira	The Stoughton Route is going to an absolute necessity for this region. The incomes, the wages that one can gain from Boston have incredible impact on the environmental health of this region.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-074.03	David Oliveira	The awful alternative is to move. That's what I've seen happen in Washington, D.C. for those that used to have an hour-and-a-half drive to two-hour drive; and, yet, those that took the train from West Virginia were able to sustain it over lengthy careers.	Thank you for your comment.
H-074.04	David Oliveira	The Rapid Bus, I've always been a fan of it. I think it's good for America as a whole. It's quick, and it's cost effective, but in this case, I'm disheartened to learn that it's -- it's not financially feasible. It's not technically feasible. I don't believe that it's second class transportation. That's not why I oppose it. It's just that it just won't work because of the 93 Route 3 split, and the costs involved with that. So the electric alternative is faster. It offers greater frequency of service and will be a huge benefit.	The Rapid Bus Alternative and attempts to optimize the Rapid Bus Alternative (the Modified Bus Alternative) were dismissed from further review in the FEIS/FEIR for the reasons explained in Section 3.1.5.2.
H-074.05	David Oliveira	<p>In terms of environmental issues and transportation issues, they often come into conflict, but we have an obligation to properly balance the needs of population growth, economic growth, and environmental protection.</p> <p>We did this with the additional runway at Logan, and we did it with the Big Dig, and those had awful environmental impacts, but ultimately we had an obligation to the future, and those projects moved forward.</p> <p>Stoughton is a great congestion mitigation project and has many positive benefits to the entire Route 93 corridor.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-074.06	David Oliveira	<p>Finally, I'd like to add that 11 years ago, I asked the then Secretary of Environmental Affairs about a NEPA study, and he said it was not necessary; so here we are 11 years later, and, please, no more delays.</p> <p>Let's just wrap up the comment period and move forward. We're going to be entering the phase for the reauthorization of T Little, which provides an opportunity to get federal money. We have to have our ducks in a row to do that.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-075.01	Mark Hess	...my official position is in support of the Stoughton Electric Route, and I'm against postponing the comment period.	Thank you for your comment.
H-075.02	Mark Hess	And in terms of my big picture opinion on this project, this isn't just a South Coast project. I mean, I'm down here because I believe in the rail. I believe in what New Bedford has to offer, but this is also an important project for the State of Massachusetts. We have all sorts of development pressures. We have problems with flight and quality of labor from the high-cost living areas, such as Boston, and here in New Bedford, in the South Coast, we have a hard time creating quality jobs and getting the investment in this area. So, creating this link creates a more efficient market between people in Boston who would love to find -- the fair market rent after utilities in New Bedford is about -- the HUD fair market rent for 2011 is about \$750. You know, you're going to pay at least double that in Boston for equivalent housing.	Thank you for your comment.
H-075.03	Mark Hess	So there is a lot of opportunity to offer on an already existing urban infrastructure without developing new housing very, very expensive housing to build it in Boston with all sorts of subsidies to service the growing needs of businesses and workforce in Boston. Here we have something to offer. more jobs and a quality workforce with the good work ethic down here that simply needs a more efficient connection to job opportunities in the Boston area; and in terms of quality of life, you know, I spend many days a week up in Boston myself, and I think that having an opportunity to give to your family and to your community is important, and when you spend three hours in a car on your way home every day, it's a major sacrifice, and I don't think that it's -- it should be what we have to experience here down in New Bedford. I would rather spend that time with my family and in my community; and that's my comment.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-076.01	Len Coriaty	I stand in support of commuter rail to the South Coast, the Stoughton Alternative, and the electric train; and I stand before you in three capacities: a taxpayer, a parent, and the Executive Director of the Greater New Bedford Workforce and Investment Board.	Thank you for your comment.
H-076.02	Len Coriaty	...and I have traveled Route 24 for some 30 years, and the traffic on 24 has gotten worse and worse and worse each year. There was a time you could make it all the way down to Route 128. Now you can get backed up from Brockton or Bridgewater or Taunton, and then it's just a miserable ride going and sometimes coming back. It's very stressful. It does impact the quality of life for the commuters that have to do the traveling.	Existing traffic problems were considered in Chapters 2 and 4.1.
H-076.03	Len Coriaty	As a parent, my son is a second-year student in college in Boston, and he would come home a lot more often, and my wife and I would love to have him, if it was more convenient.	Thank you for your comment.
H-076.04	Len Coriaty	As a taxpayer, you've made a very compelling case. It's a cost-benefit thing, and I won't get into all of it, but it just clearly makes a lot more sense that we -- and the benefits outweigh tremendously the costs of not taking action on this and doing that as quickly as we possibly can.	Thank you for comment.
H-076.05	Len Coriaty	And, finally, as Executive Director of the Workforce Board, it is a jobs matter. It's economic development as well as environmental issues that would make a strong case for. Again, the benefits far outweigh the costs.	Thank you for your comment.
H-077.01	Michele Paul	I'm here on behalf of the City of Fall River, the Fall River Office of Economic Development. I'm also a life-long resident of the Town of Swansea, and I'm an environmental engineer; and from each of these perspectives, I can wholeheartedly support the electric route through Stoughton.	Thank you for your comment.
H-077.02	Michele Paul	I can, you know, echo all of the sentiments and all of the reasons to come to the South Coast and all of the reasons that we need to -- to have that connectivity to Boston.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-077.03	Michele Paul	Economic development, just feeling like we're actually part of the community of Massachusetts. It's been a long time coming...	Thank you for your comment.
H-078.01	Jeffrey Rocha	<p>I am a CPA and resident of both New Bedford and St. John, in the US Virgin Islands.</p> <p>I wanted to approach this from a different perspective for the Army Corps of Engineers. Let you know you can get this done.</p> <p>The island of St. John is 20 square miles. It's three by seven. It's two-thirds US National Park. Okay? In the wintertime, we transport 200,000 people a day through the national park waters, through the national parks, so people touch it, feel it, see it, smell it, and send them right back over those federal park waters again undamaged. Please don't let our neighbors to the north let you believe for a minute it can't be done. Because it can. And that same place up north is where the traffic jam starts on Route 24. Okay?</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-078.02	Jeffrey Rocha	Lastly, shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Stoughton is the straight line, and I was surprised it didn't happen sooner. Cape Wind is here. It's coming. This is the staging area for it. We have the power coming in the form of electricity to operate the train safely and efficiently.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-079.01	Christian Smith	<p>I'm the President of GreenFleet. We're an after-school program here in New Bedford. We encourage at-risk youth to believe in their futures and to believe in themselves through hard work, job skills, and environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Now, this rail project is an opportunity for them. It's also an opportunity for Massachusetts in the environmental sense. We're going to take all these cars off the road. Everybody's said all this before. We've heard it, but this is important for my kids' futures, not only in the respect that they're going to have a good environment to be in, but they're going to have job opportunities that are going to exist, not only in New Bedford from what we bring in with the commuter rail, but also the ability to stretch out and flap their wings a little bit and get out of New Bedford in order to find some work and to come back and be a part, a meaningful part of this community.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-079.02	Christian Smith	So, I implore you, please, do everything you can to make sure that we have an environmentally sensitive electric rail running through Stoughton to New Bedford.	Thank you for your comment.
H-080.01	Thomas Sargent	And I would like to register my support for the Stoughton route, and all of the reasons that have been explained and so forth. I say, you know, let's get the show on the road.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-081.01	Chuck Dade	<p>I'm just thinking if they're thinking about changing the location to Attleboro, as opposed to Stoughton, this is an idea that I have been thinking about for a long time. Attleboro would make it an even easier decision, I would think, is that I think instead of having a train go directly to Boston, we should have a train that goes to Providence, because Providence is already connected to Boston. Providence is connected to New York. Providence is connected to D.C., and all points connected to those points. So I would think it would be a better expenditure of federal dollars, both from the Nation's perspective of access to the South Coast and Cape Cod and the islands as well as South Coast, Cape Cod and the Islands' access to the rest of the country if we had a train that went to Providence, because they wouldn't give us not only that, but it would give us access to Providence, so you would be able to hop a daily to Providence, if you live in Providence, and back you wouldn't have to use a car, and you would be able to have maybe a ten minute extra ride to Boston to transfer, because there probably a high speed train 20 minutes to Boston -- I mean to Providence, and probably 40 minutes to Boston from there. I just think that is the way we should go. I don't think we should go directly to Boston. From a federal perspective, I think we should go to Providence and then to Boston. I think that's a much better way of doing it once and for all.</p> <p>I think that's good. Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>Well, I should add if you are going to spend billions of dollars, you should get it right the first time, not play catch-up to an old idea. The old idea -- we have been fighting in this region to be treated with equity to have train access to get to Boston, and there has been a lot of -- the general mentality, we're at that last hurdle to get to Boston, but they may miss the boat to the bigger idea of getting to New York, D.C. and Boston.</p>	<p>The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration, see Section 3.1.5.1.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-082.01	Scott W. Lang	<p>I was elected in November of 2005 and have been keenly focused on bringing rail to New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton by way of the South Coast Rail Project. I believe that it is an absolutely vital transportation project for our portion of the state, which is the fastest growing region in Massachusetts.</p> <p>I believe that it restores appropriate freight service, as well as passenger service, by way of a 21st century infrastructure project that will bring not only economic development opportunities for our area, but also fulfill a social, economic and environmental justice agenda for Southeastern Massachusetts. It will provide construction jobs in its inception during a period in our economy when we are struggling to get out of the worse recession that we've had since the Depression.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-082.02	Scott W. Lang	It will then provide for detailed smart growth type projects along the rail, which will lead to enhancement of quality of life by way of better housing stock, better commercial and retail opportunities, and a transportation network that will allow our citizens to travel efficiently, inexpensively, and not only to the north, towards Boston, but also from Boston to our area. It is a project that in this area of the state has been discussed for the past 30 years.	Thank you for your comment.
H-082.03	Scott W. Lang	A number of different routes have been looked at, as well as a number of different possibilities for moving people en mass, but it's clear to us that the only viable alternative is rail, and that it's completely appropriate to go through the Hockomock Swamp from Taunton through the swamp and up to Boston.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-082.04	Scott W. Lang	<p>The main reasons that I've heard that the rail is not something that people support is because first it is an expensive project. In reality, the project is a project for the entire eastern section of the state, not just Southeastern Mass., and the project involves many different components, including a total rehabilitation of the South Station corridor, which is something that's needed to service all the rail that runs through the eastern part of the state.</p> <p>In addition, the people of Southeastern Massachusetts have subsidized the T and many building projects regarding transportation in the inner 128 belt. So it's an equity issue when you look at how this project should be funded and whether or not everyone should share in the funding of the project. It's a state project; therefore, I believe it's appropriate that the state and the federal government finance the project.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-082.05	Scott W. Lang	<p>I think that what it will do is help us with our energy independence by getting more cars off the road than any other way that I know of. It will help clear up congestion, which is one of our major drivers on air quality and pollution. It will also be a green project from the standpoint of the building of the project as well as the running of the project. I favor high speed electric transportation, rather than relying on diesel. I think diesel is -- is a technology, quite frankly, that harkens back to an iron horse type of mentality. I believe that we should come up with the fastest system, which means electric, and it also means being coordinated by a sophisticated computerized routing that will allow for the quickest journey to any station and up from New Bedford to Boston, from Fall River to Boston.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-082.06	Scott W. Lang	As far as the -- as far as the issue of whether or not there should be an extension of time in which people should comment on the Army Corps of Engineers' environmental study, I believe that this project has been completely vetted in public and transparent now for over four years, and I don't believe an extension is warranted. I believe that the May 27th date is appropriate. The longer that we delay the permitting process, the longer it will take to -- to actually begin to implement the rail project.	Thank you for your comment.
H-082.07	Scott W. Lang	<p>I think that the way that I would like to see the rail built is in phases. I believe that the New Bedford to Taunton, Fall River to Taunton railbeds are already in place. They're used for freight. They need to be upgraded, and I would ask that the state and federal government begin that section of this rail project immediately. I think the permitting is very, very minimal and the laying continuously welded rail is something that we easily have capability of doing. It will put many people to work very quickly and will lead towards a shortening of the actual project.</p> <p>By beginning the project now, you'll not only get an economic stimulus going, but by the time the permitting is done through the swamp, we will have already reached Taunton and can continue to move the project in a very, very seamless manner. So I would ask that the -- the portions of the project be broken up into a southern triangle and then a swamp component. And then from the swamp up to Boston. I also would ask that the work on South Station begin in a contemporaneous way with the southern triangle so that the work that will need to be done is simply going through with continuously welded rail through the swamp. I understand that there are some trestles that need to be built and some additional engineering, and this will speed up the project dramatically.</p>	The phased approach suggested by the commenter would not meet the defined NEPA purpose and need or the overall project purpose developed by the Corps pursuant to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. Further, the Corps can only evaluate the impacts associated with a single and complete project rather than a stepped (sequential) or "piecemeal" approach.
H-082.08	Scott W. Lang	The only way from an economically viable standpoint that you can move people up and down this north/south corridor, south/north corridor is by building the rail.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-082.09	Scott W. Lang	The other thing that the rail will bring is freight that will be moved efficiently, much more rapidly than it is now, much more safely than it is now. The City of New Bedford, as well as the City of Fall River, are building freight capability using our port cities to bring in import and export cargo, and this is something that the rail will not only allow for in a much more -- in a much more efficient manner, but also will open up the -- the marine highway regarding short sea shipping, as well as -- as well as roll-on roll-off cargo.	No change in freight operations is anticipated- freight would continue to operate on segments where it currently operates

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-082.10	Scott W. Lang	<p>The federal government has begun replacing hundred-year-old bridges that service the rail system in New Bedford. We currently have three bridge projects going, somewhere in the vicinity of \$20 million. These are absolutely necessary to bring a passenger system into the City as well as refurbish the freight capability. We have one additional bridge that is over Route 18 and Wamsutta Street. This bridge needs approximately a 25 percent restoration as 25 percent of the bridge is 100 years old. The rest of it is approximately 20 years old. I ask the federal government provide the money to rebuild this 100-year portion of the bridge which will be done, I believe, in a very, very expeditious manner, and it will not cause the shut down of the -- of the route after we complete the three-bridge project. So it seems to me it makes a lot more sense to provide the funding, which I believe is somewhere between 5 and \$7 million to finish up all the rail bridges in the City, rather than doing three and then having to shut down the rail to do the last 25 percent of one.</p> <p>In addition, that last 25 percent of the Wamsutta Street bridge is the closest bridge to the harbor transportation system, which means that we would not be able to use the harbor transportation system until that bridge has been rebuilt. So the time for this, I believe, is right now as well. So my message simply is let's begin to build it. Let's begin to build it in a way that is -- that is 21st century technology, which means electric, and let us begin to plan for the areas around -- around the line by way of smart growth, by way of station planning, and by way of beginning to think that in terms of moving people to the station by way of bike, by way of car, by way of bus, by way of walking, but let's start spending our time planning for this as we go ahead and begin to build the southern section of the rail.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-083.01	Hannah Martin	My question is: Why would the Army Corps of Engineers produce and build a railroad between New Bedford and Boston when without traffic it could take one hour or 45 minutes; and with traffic, it would only take two hours?	USACE will not build or operate the project. The project is proposed by MassDOT. USACE is the federal lead agency for the project because the project requires permits under the Clean Water Act (among others). The purpose and need for the project is explained in Chapter 2.
H-084.01	Ariane Martin	I think that the rail connecting Boston to -- from Boston to New Bedford is of extreme importance. Economically and environmentally, it would make a sound choice on our behalf and create more jobs and bring in more revenue to the State of Massachusetts.	The EIS/EIR considered the economic benefits of the project, based in part on the 2010 South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan. See Chapter 5- Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts.
H-084.02	Ariane Martin	My concern for the wetlands, I don't want them to be disturbed, if we don't have to, and if there's an alternative way to go around the wetlands and make it be environmentally safe then I think we should do that, but we still need to -- we need to continue to connect the South Shore with the rest of the State of Massachusetts.	USACE considered a wide range of alternatives to meet the project purpose (see Chapter 3--Alternatives for a summary of the process).
H-085.01	Bruce Duarte, Jr.	I am making this statement in support of the Stoughton line for rail; and you know, I'm going to be as simple as I possibly can by stating jobs, jobs, jobs. Economic justice for our South Coast. The fact of the matter is this is not just about the South Coast going to Boston, but more to me it's about Boston coming to the South Coast, enjoying our restaurants, enjoying our museums, our beaches, enjoying our national park, the Whaling National Park, things of that nature that I think we're not -- the folks in Boston aren't given the opportunity to see because of transportation issues in some instances.	Thank you for your comment. Economic revitalization and smart growth were among the potential project benefits considered by USACE in the EIS/EIR.
H-085.02	Bruce Duarte, Jr.	This is about environmental justice. This is about taking thousands of vehicles off our state highways and allowing folks to travel on the train and not putting all that carbon in the area as far as that is concerned.	Both environmental justice (Chapter 4.4) and greenhouse gas emissions reductions were considered (Chapter 4.9).

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-085.03	Bruce Duarte, Jr.	<p>So, my statement, I think, is absolutely for, absolutely for this South Coast Rail. I don't believe that we should extend any periods. I think, as stated, that the information has been out there since '09. We're in '11. This project needs to go forward ASAP, a bird in the hand so to speak. I think if we wait too long then we may lose funding that's critically important, as we all know, to get this project done, and I'm talking about federal funding.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. No federal funding is involved at this time.</p>
H-086.01	Christopher Markey	<p>I'm a State Representative for the Ninth Bristol District, and I just wanted to add to my comments made in the public hearing in regard to the economic development of the South Coast, which will be benefitted from the South Coast Rail Project.</p> <p>As I mentioned briefly that approximately 80 years ago two bridges were built across the Cape Cod Canal, and there were very few bridges -- very few vehicles and very few roads, and we look back 80 years, and we wonder what would we do without those two bridges in that economic development that has developed as a result of people being able to be transported from the mainland to Cape Cod.</p> <p>I find that the South Coast Rail will have the same effect on the South Coast. The development of the South Coast is really essential for the development of Massachusetts as well. This is one of the areas in Eastern Massachusetts that has not been fully developed, and I think having the access to Boston would allow for significant positive economic development where we would grow our tax base, establish great education institutions, and allow for our citizens to be the most productive they could possibly be. So, therefore, I'm absolutely in favor of the Stoughton Route for the development of the South Coast Rail.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-087.01	Tridib Roy	The rail will provide an easy access, convenient and economic and fast connection to bring people of other areas to enjoy the nature's grandeur of this area, such as its nice clean beaches, railroads and creeks, ponds and parks all over the area. This area is so close and yet so far because without rail people do not have access.	Thank you for your comment.
H-087.02	Tridib Roy	<p>Boston and the suburbs have a great scarcity of housing, and the ones that are available are exorbitantly expensive. The South Coast, on the other hand, provides an abundance of housing facilities, nice waterfront locations, big nice lawns, much open space for growth and development, and to live in luxury and comfort, rather than the cramped accommodation of the Boston area.</p> <p>People can live here and work in Boston. It's very easy access with the rail commute. It's another win-win situation.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-087.03	Tridib Roy	Convenient access to the best medical facilities for the area residents. As we know, Boston has one of the best and most advanced medical facilities and state-of-the-art practicing physicians and specialists. The rail will provide an easy access to these facilities for the people of this area. No driving, no parking headaches to travel to Boston.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-087.04	Tridib Roy	<p>Another advantage is Boston is loaded with many facilities of entertainment and learning centers, such as theaters, sports arenas, museums, musical halls, great restaurants, which will be easily accessible to the area residents. Now also people commute to Boston to enjoy those, but driving back and forth and parking are always big headaches, and that's why it is less attractive for them. With the rail, that will make them easy access, and they would be able to use more of these facilities.</p> <p>Again, it will help the business there in the Boston area, and it will make better use of this facilities for many of which our tax dollars are also used to support or subsidize.</p> <p>So with those, I would like to say that I am convinced that the South Coast Rail will be a big plus point both for the Boston area as well as for the South Coast area.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-087.05	Tridib Roy	<p>I believe the -- out of the alternatives, the electric train will be a better choice to build. The initial cost may be higher, a bit, but in the long run it will be more economical. It will save time, less noise, and less pollution.</p> <p>Also it will be amenable to use newer and environmental friendly energy of the future, such as wind energy and solar energy. Also it will be amenable to high-speed technology, just like the bullet train or high speed train can be used with electric trains.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-087.06	Tridib Roy	And I also support the Stoughton Alternative, which would be more direct, and it will save time for the commuters, both for New Bedford and Fall River.	Thank you for your comment.
H-087.07	Tridib Roy	I also would like to mention that no extension of the hearing beyond May 27th is necessary. We have already had many studies; and, therefore, it will be my request that the committee takes a decision on this thing in favor of building the project as early as possible.	Thank you for your comment.



Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-088.01	David Benway	I just want to say that I'm in favor of the Stoughton Route, not the Whittenton Route. I would like to see the train electric, and in these tough economic times with gas prices reaching \$4 a gallon we need to take the 8,000 cars off the road. Now is the best time to do this.	Thank you for your comment.
H-088.02	David Benway	Plymouth, Hingham, Lakeville all have the rail. Why doesn't New Bedford and Fall River have it? Is it something to do with poor, black, Hispanic? You know, please stop the economic injustice.	Beneficial and adverse impacts on environmental justice communities are addressed in Chapter 4.4.
H-088.03	David Benway	Do not extend the comment period. The people who oppose it, the rail system coming to New Bedford and Fall River, already have access to the rail. This is not fair.	Thank you for your comment.
H-089.01	Deborah Roher	As I say, I take very seriously the issues raised about endangered species and damage to the wetlands, but in the intervening 20 years, I've seen Route 24 expanded and repaved, I don't know how many times; and moreover, the new entrances and exits built off routes -- Route 24 and all along the Route 140 and Route 24 corridor all of the sprawl-type developments, the strip malls with the impervious paving taking up who knows how many acres of what used to be very nice meadows, the destructive single family suburban subdivisions, which have been the predominant kind of development, and I've also seen all of that development benefit the suburbs and further impoverish the city. So I really hope that the outcome of this process will be a determination that we can have our rail service from Fall River and New Bedford. I believe that it will be environmental as well as an economic and cultural enrichment benefit to the state and to all of us in this area.	Encouraging compact development in existing centers was a potential project benefit evaluated in Chapter 5.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-090.01	Angela Bannister	<p>I have lived here for a year and a half. I graduate college in two weeks, and I am scared for this economic area. I would like to one day call New Bedford my home. I would like to raise a family here, and I would like to have access to Boston, and I think that the -- the Stoughton line is the best reliable and efficient means of transportation for this area.</p> <p>New Bedford has a very bad reputation currently due to the lack of accessibility and inequality that we unfortunately have; and again, I'm a young new grad, and I would like to be able to build my home in New Bedford and still have access to jobs in Boston and be able to provide for my family if I -- if I decide to stay in New Bedford and live and work.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-091.01	Matthew Coes	I support the Stoughton Route with electric service and oppose an extension of review. I am an environmentalist. I commute to work with a bicycle, but I am a big picture environmentalist, and in this case the benefits far outweigh the costs.	Thank you for your comment.
H-091.02	Matthew Coes	The South Coast Rail will be a vigorous economic course and provide the typical opportunities for both ends of the rail project.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-092.01	Scott W. Lang	<p>There were a couple of other issues that I wanted to address at the end of the evening. The first one was the issue regarding subsidy of this rail project and the idea that this project would be unduly subsidized by other areas of the state. The fact is that this is a state project, a project that will benefit all citizens in Massachusetts, and currently all citizens subsidize all forms of highway, airport, train, harbor projects.</p> <p>The idea that we would be asked to subsidize all other parts of the state regarding rail and then the issue would be brought up as to whether or not other parts of the regions of Massachusetts should subsidize New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton's rail is not appropriate and is certainly not equitable from the standpoint of equal protection and in the whole theory of the benefit for all within the state. And it creates a disproportionate advantage to live outside of New Bedford based on the fact that we don't have the infrastructure for transportation that other areas of the state would have.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-092.02	Scott W. Lang	<p>The other thing that I would like to state is this idea that the train would be an inconvenience or an imposition to pass through different communities. Again, with the -- with the eye on the fact that this benefits the entire state, there is no community that should put up a barrier to progress for any region of the state and for the entire state. Just as if a town would argue against having a highway go through their town or infrastructure projects within their town that benefit the entire region to argue that the rail going through a specific town is not fair to the town really misses the point of a unified sovereign state entity. So I would hope that that is not an issue that in any way affects the Army Corps' decision.</p>	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-092.03	Scott W. Lang	<p>On a whole, if you look at the balance of this project, it will, in fact, benefit the entire state. It will increase the tax base in the state, decrease unemployment within the state and lead towards a quality of life for all those who live in the state being enhanced.</p> <p>It also will help clean up the environment. So if you look at this as a project that not only affects the New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton, South Coast region, but look at it as a project that affects the good of the whole, this project should go forward.</p>	Thank you for your comment.
H-093.01	Charles Crowley	As Mayor of the City of Taunton, I, along with the unanimous support of the several editions of the Taunton Municipal Council have enthusiastically supported the direct Stoughton Route that will provide rail service to our community and to the South Coast region in a more timely and cost effective manner.	Thank you for your comment.

Comment ID	Name	Comment	Response
H-093.02	Charles Crowley	<p>The citizens of Taunton through their elected representatives have gone on record as in favor of the direct Stoughton Route, and they have also gone on record as emphatically opposed to the Attleboro Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route, as those options would provide from fourteen to fifteen (15) at-grade crossings within our community, and effectively cut off public safety operations within our community. The Attleboro Route and the Whittenton Alternative Route would also cause the trips between Boston and the South Coast communities to be longer and less cost effective. The Attleboro Route as well as the Whittenton Alternative Route would cause the trains to run through our heavily congested residential area where the houses are right up against the tracks. The noise mitigation measures that would be necessary would also add to the costs of this route.</p> <p>Attleboro officials have long contested that route for environmental reason. My administration with the unanimous support of the Taunton Municipal Council in Taunton has worked closely with the Selectman of Dighton and Norton to endorse the application Three Mile River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (A.C.E.C.), which was recently adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Attleboro Route runs directly through this A.C.E.C.</p>	<p>The Stoughton Alternatives would provide the fastest travel time to Boston and consequently the highest ridership (see Chapter 4.1). The Attleboro Alternatives have been eliminated from further consideration (although for reasons unrelated to ridership), see Section 3.1.5.1.</p> <p>At-grade crossing impacts were evaluated in Chapter 4.1. Noise mitigation measures were evaluated in Chapter 4.6.</p>